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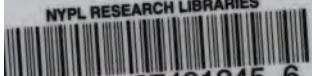
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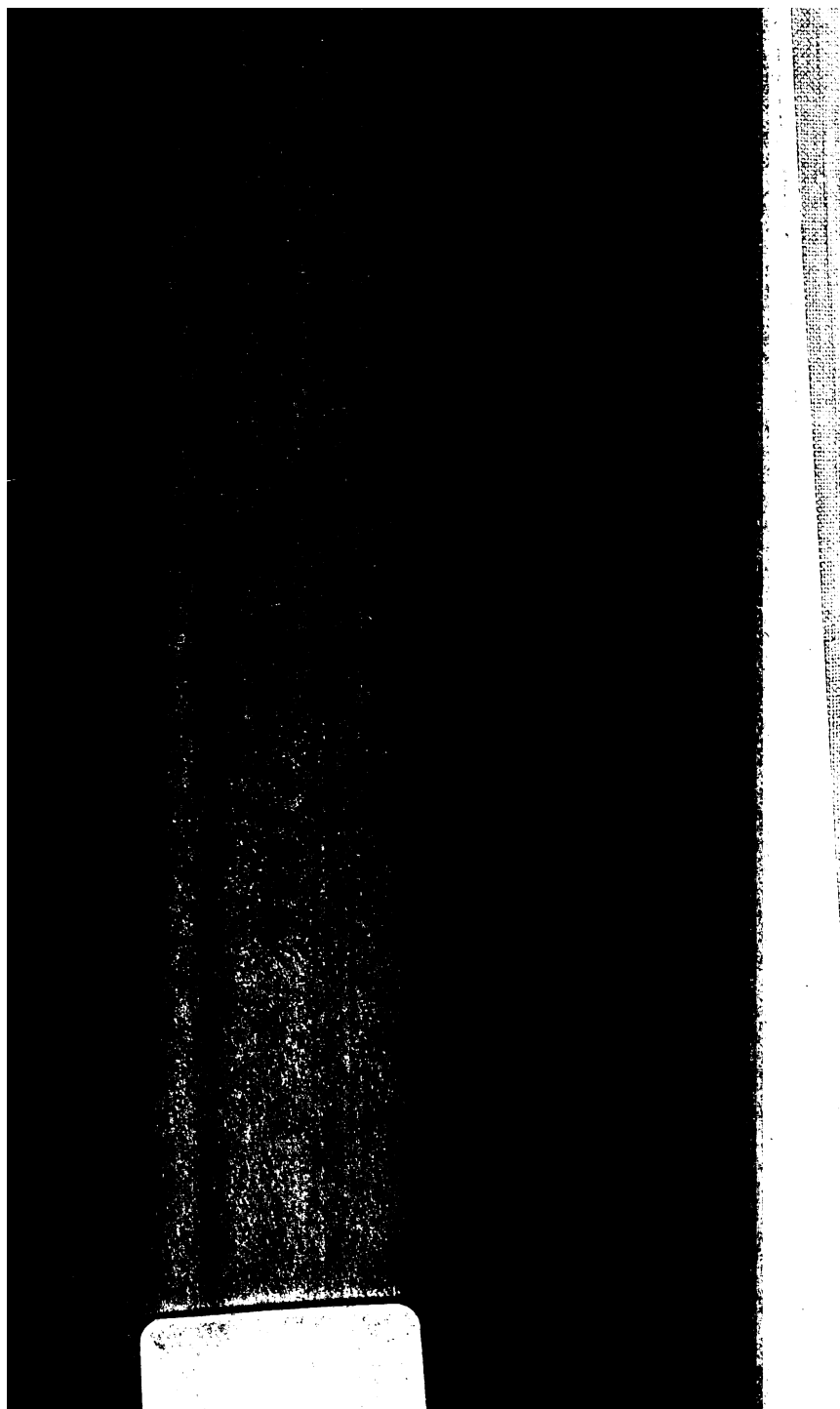
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TRAGIC DRAMAS.

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1. Drama, English

TRAGIC DRAMAS;

CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR

REPRESENTATION IN PRIVATE FAMILIES:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

ARISTODEMUS,

A TRAGEDY,

FROM THE ITALIAN OF VINCENZO MONTI.

BY FRANCES BURNEY.

— "Virtue owns the Tragic Muse a friend;
"Fable her means, Morality her end."

CHABBE.

LONDON:

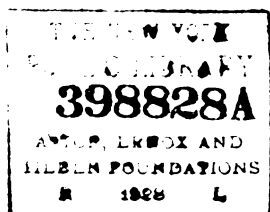
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FOR THE AUTHOR;

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1818.

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P R E F A C E.

A LONG apology for a short work may be liable to just censure, as annexing to a trifle an undue importance. Various motives, nevertheless, having combined to induce the Writer of the following pages to bring them before the Public, she is desirous, by stating a few of them, to obviate as much as possible, the imputation of temerity, to which the publication of them may subject her: more especially since, wholly unknown herself in the world of literature, she can adduce the name, only, of her family, to attract attention, and stimulate curiosity, unaccompanied by any pretensions to the abilities requisite to fix the one, or gratify the other.

It has always appeared to her, that the objections which may be urged against private Theatres in

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general, are not, in justice, applicable to those domestic Representations, in which the younger branches of a family perform select pieces ; and to which only parents, relations, or friends particularly intimate, are admitted : and she has the sanction of judgments far superior to her own, and even clerical authority, for deeming the innocent and interesting recreation of speaking in character, to a little circle of chosen friends, an exercise not more obviously calculated to afford general entertainment, than to promote individual improvement.

Most people, at some period of their lives, are fond of what is usually termed *spouting* ; while such as have, for themselves, outlived that inclination, often derive nearly equal amusement from witnessing the scenic efforts of their juniors. Recourse, therefore, is not unfrequently had to *Stage-plays*, for the purpose of private exhibition : but even where these are not objectionable in any other respect, which is by no means invariably the case, it is a task, demanding no inconsiderable skill and pains, to modify or curtail, so as to accommodate

them completely to the purpose ; while to perform them in their pristine state, would frequently be attended with difficulties yet more insurmountable.

Something, therefore, distinct from these, yet of more continuity of interest, than can be maintained by the recitation of detached *Speeches*, *Dialogues*, or *Scenes*, though selected from dramatic works of even the highest excellence ;—Something, also, which consistently with propriety, and perfect freedom from any evil tendency, may admit of more impassioned action and diversified effect, than is usually thought within the province of the *Sacred Drama*, appears desirable in our literature. The Writer is well aware that she is, herself, incapable of supplying the deficiency she indicates ; having neither the time nor the talents needful for the purpose ; but ventures to offer both her little sketches, in the hope that, not only, some hand more skilful than her own, will hereafter improve on the imperfect plan which she merely shadows out ; but that, notwithstanding their acknowledged faults of structure and execution ; their feebleness, and per-

haps inaccuracy, of diction, since they have received no corrections but such as she has herself been able to give them ; they will yet be found not inadequate to the purpose for which they were designed, and unexceptionable, at all events, in their moral tendency.

A plot and scenery, of a simple, or at least, not complicated description ; and characters, few in number, or if otherwise, attired in a *costume* easily adopted by either sex ; are among the lesser *desiderata* of the domestic drama. An attempt has been made to combine them, respectively, in the two first pieces : little being aimed at, beyond furnishing materials for occasional amusement, which, if not esteemed as profitable, may at least be admitted to be harmless.

It is, perhaps, a recommendation to these little Dramas, which would not advantageously be withheld, that they have both already been, more than once, represented by the junior members of a Family of distinction, and of the first respectability.

That the performance of amiable and intelligent young persons should elicit applause from an auditory composed of their parents and private friends, could tend neither to excite the surprise, nor flatter the vanity of the writer. But she derives her chief encouragement to make them public, from the sympathy, apparently felt, and unequivocally expressed, on the part of the audience, with which every representation has been honoured. Such demonstrations of interest, however, as are the result, in general, of something more than mere complaisance to either actors or author, she now adduces, gratifying as they must be, only as affording, perhaps, the best palliation she can offer for her apparent presumption.

The publication of this little work has also been, in some measure, accelerated, by the circumstance of several transcripts of the Dramas having been disseminated among friends who have requested copies. It seemed not impossible, that, by a casualty for which they might not be responsible, a more defective specimen might make its appearance, in

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these publishing times, to the manifest detriment of the Writer in a variety of ways.

Honoured as she must, of necessity, feel herself, by the flattering permission so kindly accorded her, to inscribe the inconsiderable labours of her pen to THREE LADIES, all less distinguished, even by their elevated rank, than by their eminently amiable and estimable qualities; she is yet, from the very circumstance of the honour so conferred on her little volume, compelled to feel, more sensibly, its intrinsic unimportance: and the pride with which she would naturally contemplate names attached to *her* work, which would bestow consequence on *any*, is thence, not merely abated in her mind, but even converted into a sense of humiliation.

Sensations of a similar kind, alike the result of conscious inferiority, accrue to the Writer from her bearing the names, which once designated her Aunt, *Madame D'ARBLAY*; an Author, whose deservedly-admired compositions of another class, it is as need-

less, as, at this juncture, impolitic, to recall to the minds of the Readers.

FITZORMOND, the only piece in this collection, which has any pretension to originality, or rather, perhaps, which owes nothing to a foreign hand, (for similitude may exist, though none has been intended,) will, nevertheless, as a *juvenile* attempt, make large demands on the indulgence of the Reader. This is stated, in strict justice to the piece itself; although to the majority, in all probability, of those who may peruse it, the internal evidence it exhibits, will sufficiently demonstrate the fact. It was, indeed, begun at the age of seventeen: and though laid aside for a time, was concluded within a short period of its commencement. As will be evident, it was written for a very limited, as well as youthful *company*; and this circumstance, added to the great restrictions which the Writer was under in regard to scenery, occasioned her no small difficulty in the construction and conduct of her little plot; to which her ignorance, at the time, of the established Laws of the Drama, not inconsiderably contributed.

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MALEK ADHEL was expressly put into English verse, and into a dramatic form, for a young family, *amateurs* of tragic acting, to some among whom, the brevity of the parts allotted to themselves furnished their best recommendation. In consequence, the characters are by no means fully developed. To exhibit them in a more interesting point of view, perhaps, the action should have been begun at an earlier period of the story, and continued through five acts, to the close. But this would have required more leisure than could, at the time, be commanded for the experiment; and would probably, when done, have unfitted the piece, in some measure, for the purpose intended. The Prologue originally spoken at the performance, has been adjoined to this drama, only as affording an introduction, apparently necessary, to the local and relative situations of the characters at its commencement. It has been attempted to preserve, in a certain degree, the unity of place, by substituting the Plains of *Cesarea* for *Ascalon*, the true scene of the decisive battle against the Saracens: but in other respects, the Romance of *Madame COTTIN* has been as

closely adhered to, and her sentiments as faithfully retained, as possible ; from every motive of respect and justice to her, the Spectators, and the Reader, as well as to the obvious assistance and advantage of the *translating Dramatist*.

ARISTODEMUS, which it is scarcely necessary to distinguish here, as intended, neither by its Author nor Translator, for private representation, she has perhaps, rendered into English with as little deviation from the celebrated ARISTODEMO of MONTI, as the nature of the work, and the structure of our verse would allow. The original is the most admired composition, as far as the Translator can learn, on the Italian stage ; and is seemingly preferred, by the natives of *Italy*, even to the Tragedies of ALFIERI himself. The work of translation was undertaken at the express recommendation of a Gentleman of that country, who was, himself, persuaded that it might be performed, with effect, before an English Audience. It has never been submitted, however, to the judgment of any Manager : the little encouragement hitherto given, in our Theatres,

to plays written on the ancient Greek model, appearing sufficiently decisive of the question.

To conclude, the three following attempts are ushered into the world, with the anxiety natural on an occasion, which, however uninteresting to the Public, cannot, to the Writer, seem otherwise than awfully important. But, while shrinking from the recollection of her own insignificance, whether as Author, Dramatist, or Translator, she deems herself fortunate in the privilege to shelter it, even partially, under names of such eminence in the literary world, as are those of MONTI and COTTIN.

F. B.

London, July 14, 1818.

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FITZORMOND, or Cherished Resentment.

MALEK ADHEL, the Champion of the Crescent.

ARISTODEMUS, or the Spectre.

FITZORMOND;

OR,

Cherished Resentment.

17 (18-19)

FITZORMOND;
OR,
CHERISHED RESENTMENT.

A TRAGIC DRAMA.

In Three Acts.

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY PERMISSION,
TO HER GRACE
THE DUCHESS OF DORSET.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FITZORMOND, }
CHARLAMONT, } Irish Noblemen.
JOSELINE, an ancient Domestic of Fitzormond's.

LADY FITZORMOND.
CHILD.

The Scene lies in Ireland.

FITZORMOND.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Forest.—Night.

Enter CHARLAMONT.

Char. HAIL, solitary shades, for silent woe
And deep, and mournful meditation made!
Whose dark recesses ne'er were yet explor'd
By human foot; unless some wretch forlorn,
Like me, perchance, the sport of wayward fate,
Has 'mid your glooms that friendly refuge sought
Which the drear grave alone can give to me!—
Ye venerable oaks, whose tufted tops
And far-stretch'd boughs exclude the moon's pale beam,
Bidding these wild and melancholy woods
Frown with unvaried horror, ye are welcome,
Thrice welcome to the soul your sadness suits!
The traveller with reverential awe
Gazes upon you, as the monuments

Of ages past, when Druids met, perhaps,
Amid your solemn shades, and spirits dwelt
In the old hollows of your time-worn trunks;
But I will welcome your severest glooms,
And dwell amid your dreariest solitudes.
No living eye shall e'er again behold
Or mock my sufferings.—Hah! what light is this,
Which casts its feeble rays athwart my way?
Am I so near the hated haunts of man?—
A female form! I am discover'd,—lost!
Dark night, befriend me! I must pierce these shades,
And seek their closest covert for my safety.

[Exit into the wood.]

SCENE II.

Enter Lady FITZORMOND, bearing a light.

Lady. This light burns dimly; and as I pass on,
It seems to throw gigantic shadows round.
I trust I was deceiv'd—it could not be;—
These unfrequented woods no ground afford
For coward fear, or womanish distrust;
Yet still, methinks, that piercing through the glade,
A form, no false illusion of the mind,—
Quick darted 'cross my path: it could not be;
And yet, methought I heard a human voice.
It must be fancy all; th' effect alone
Of feverous imagination, raising
New terrors, ever, for the mind oppress'd:—
Mine has been long enfeebled by th' endurance

Of long-protracted, almost hopeless anguish.
My husband! oh! what fearful images
Throng on my fancy as my lips pronounce
That name, so justly honour'd,—dearly lov'd!
For sure some fatal accident detains thee,
Or thou but mock'st me with thy promis'd coming.
Would thou wert here! my frame enfeebled bends
Beneath the weight of my anxiety
For thee, and for my child,—perhaps, ere this
Robb'd of a father! Oh, avert the thought,
All-pitying Heav'n! and bid the ruthless war
Which with its own blood deluges my country,
And tears its entrails, cease from desolation!
But let me seek the solitary cell,
Once sacred to the holy hermit's prayers,
Where undisturb'd, and by the world unheard,
I dare breathe forth to heav'n my sad petitions.
Devotion shall dispel the gloomy fears
That haunt my mind, and bring the balm of ease.

[Exit.

SCENE III.

Re-enter CHARLAMONT, from the wood.

Char. Angelic vision, stay! ah no!—she's gone!
Where am I?—Did my senses then deceive me,
Or did I truly hear and see—my sister?
'Twas doubtless she; for by her taper's rays,
And by the trembling beam of the wan moon,—
Which then first darted on us from the sky,

Gilding her face with momentary light,—
I mark'd her well : that lovely form, that voice too !
I could not be mistaken.—I must follow ;—
But no !—curs'd fate ! I dare not !—scarce I dare
Thus linger here ; for danger lurks around.
Perchance this spot, all dreary as it seems,
May near her habitation lie.—Perchance
There is for me no hope, no comfort left !
Melania, wedded to some haughty lord,
Perhaps may look with horror on this waid'rer,
This vagrant brother, flying, still, the stroke
Severe, of justice for a murd'rous deed.
Her husband, too, may look with proud disdain
On all the guilty wretchedness I bring,
And scowl imperious on my misery.
That thought brings daggers to transfix my heart !—
Oh ! days for ever flown !—Days of delight !
Succeeded by long years of galling pain,
Of torturing absence from my native home,
My hapless mother, and my dear Melania—
Is this your end at last ? Thus do I meet thee ?

[*Looking out,*

Thus plung'd in anguish, thus condemn'd to shame ?
And must I fly thee ?—No ; whate'er th' event,
If once again thou turn this way, I'll break
The cruel chain that bound my tongue in silence,
And pour my sorrows in thy gentle ear.
Though I no hope expect to gain from thee,
Thy soft compassion yet may sooth my mind,

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Enter JOSCELINE.

Jos. Could I but learn the secret cause which brings
My lady, nightly, to this lonely spot,
'Twould ease my mind of many painful fears
Which have perplex'd it long.—I hear her step ;
She comes this way : the moon will soon appear,
And aid me to perceive and note her purpose,
While at a distance I remain to watch her.
Forgive, fair lady, my intrusive zeal,
Which seeks to know, what you would fain conceal.

[Retires among the trees.]

SCENE V.

Re-enter Lady FITZORMOND.

Lady. My taper's spent, yet am I loth to quit
The deep'ning glooms of this sequester'd scene.
The solemn hour of midnight comes ; the forest
Is still, and darksome as the grave : no noise
Breaks the dread silence of the hour, save where
From yon far-distant battlements, the wind
Brings to mine ear, with its own hollow whistlings,
The screech-owl's ominous note :—a mournful sound,
That thrills my mind with superstitious awe,
And dire presagements of approaching ill !
Unfold, ye heavy, thick, portentous clouds ;

And bid the radiant moon's bright glimm'rings fall
O'er my bewilder'd path, to chase this horror
Which creeps through every vein, and numbs my heart!

[Takes a picture, and sits down.]

Come forth, thou little treasur'd consolation!
Come, and charm far away these sad impressions,
Dear image of my hapless Charlamont—
My rash, my generous, ill-fated brother!
Ah! whither has thy cruel doom convey'd thee?
Art thou on earth, or does thy listening spirit
Still hover round, and witness my regrets?

SCENE VI.

Lady FITZORMOND, CHARLAMONT.

Char. Ah! did I hear aright?—And beats, Melania,
Thy heart with all its wonted love for me?

Lady. (retreating.) Oh Heav'n! what art thou?

Char. Charlamont—thy brother!

Lady. (alarmed.) Art thou indeed the shade of Charlamont?

Char. Nay, I am Charlamont himself; and thus
I claim Melania's credence. *[Embracing her.]*

Lady. Oh! forgive

If I have deem'd such joy was not for me!
Say by what happy chance thou'rt here?

Char. Through dangers,
Through toils severe, and sorrows which, describ'd
Would pain thy gentle soul, I found my way

To blest Hibernia's shores.—Did I say blest?

Ah, no! my happiness was gone for ever!

Lady. Thou shouldst not be unhappy, for thy heart
Is kind, and tender as the cradled babe's.

But where hast thou been wand'ring, Charlamont?

And what has been thy fate since last I saw thee?

I will not chide thee now for cruelty;

But sure, my brother, 'twas unkindly done,

To leave thy mother and myself;—to fly,

Nor tell us why we lost thee!

Char. Dear Melania,

I would not wound you with so sad a tale;

But 'twas a luckless duel, my dear sister,—

Wherein I left for dead my fierce opponent,

And stamp'd the mis'ry of my after life,—

Which forc'd me to an ignominious flight;

Forc'd me to bring dishonour on our name.

To India's golden climes I wing'd my way,

When adverse fortune at one blow destroy'd

My sole remaining hopes; a corsair seiz'd

Our hapless vessel, and for Tunis sail'd.—

There, sold to slavery, and doom'd to chains,

A tyrant master five long years I serv'd,

Who, dying, left me free. Oh! with what haste

Would I again have sought my native isle!

But slow and painful were the steps, Melania,

Which brought me hither. I would spare thee, yet,

The sad recital of my miseries past,

Since, Heav'n assisting, I at length found means

To turn once more to lov'd Hibernia: then,

I learn'd that he I thought a fallen foe,
Still liv'd ; I heard a rumour of your marriage :
But of my mother nothing could I learn,
Nor ev'n your husband's name.

Lady. Oh ! my poor mother !
Thy cruel absence wrung her soul with anguish ;
Nor did she long so great a loss survive.

Char. Wretch that I am ! vile slave of headstrong rage,
And tool of passion, I destroy'd that parent,—
That dear, that tender parent !—She who gave
The life I am not worthy to possess,
Liv'd but to see her own by me embitter'd !
Unhappy, injur'd mother ! let these tears,
Which flow from unfeign'd sorrow, true repentance,
Appease thy shade !—Oh ! that this impious hand,
Which brought dishonour and disgrace on thee,
Were perish'd,—ev'n to dust !

Lady. Hold, Charlamont !
I must not see thee thus destroy thyself
By these mad starts of passion. Calm the tempest
Of thy distracted mind, and tell me how
Thou hither cam'st. What friendly star convey'd thee
To thy fond sister ?

Char. Chance convey'd me hither.
I sought alone a savage wilderness,
Wherein to hide me from mankind for ever ;
But since, for once, my destinies have smil'd,
And brought me near th' abode of my Melania,
I will to her disclose my sufferings,
Ere I for ever bid the world farewell.

But I already have enough reveal'd
To shock thy feeling tenderness for me ;
The rest I will defer : and for to night
I'll leave thee, ev'n to seek amid these shades
Some cavern'd hollow of an o'ergrown oak,
Whose trunk may yield me shelter from the air.—
Repose I look not for. Adieu, Melania !

[*Embracing her.*]

Again to-morrow meet me in this spot.

Lady. Wilt thou not to the shelter of our roof ?
The castle stands on the proud eminence
That woos yon silv'ry stream ; I'll lead thee to it :
Come with me.

Char. No.

Lady. But wherefore not ?

Char. 'Twere death,

Or, worse than death, 'twere public degradation,
For Charlamont, were he discover'd here :—
Thy lord himself I dare not trust, Melania.

Lady. Oh ! he is goodness all—all kind compassion ;
And now is distant far. Alas ! my brother,
Wherefore dost thou mistrust him ?—wherefore fear ?

Char. I'm guilty, and I still must dwell in fear ;
For 'tis their portion ever to be cowards,
Who feel that they deserve the ills they meet.
This wood shall be my refuge : no pursuit
O'ertake me here ; here may I nurse my sadness,
And hide my shame.

Lady. I'll not believe thee guilty ;
But since thou art so bent on solitude,

I'll point thee out a fitter place of rest.
That path will lead thee to a moss-grown cell,
Once an old hermit's simple habitation :
There, thou may'st screen thee from the winds of night,
And court repose in safety. Enter boldly ;
That cell is sacred to my nightly prayers,
When I retire to pray for thee, my brother,
And for my husband : no one else, believe me,
E'er seeks admission there.

Char. Since 'tis a spot
Forsaken by the world, I'll gladly seek it ;
For well 'twill suit the temper of my soul.

Lady. To-morrow at the hour of noon I'll come,
And learn the rest of thy unhappy story :
I'll bring refreshments too, for sure thou need'st them ;
Till then, my Charlamont, farewell.

Char. All joy
Attend my much lov'd sister ! Be it hers
Never to know a woe that equals mine ! [Exit.

SCENE VII.

Manet Lady FITZORMOND.

Lady. Amen to thy sad pray'r, my hapless brother !
Oh ! why do we thus meet,—thus part ? What mystery
Involves thy fate, too dreadful to unfold ?
Hah ! Josceline here ?—Heav'n grant he has seen nought
To raise conjecture, or awake his doubts !

SCENE VIII.

Lady FITZORMOND, JOSCELINE.

What brings thee here, my friend ?

Jos. My fears for you.

Pardon me, lady, that I interrupt

The sacred privacy of your retirement ;

But anxious apprehensions for your safety,

In this lone wood,—at this unwonted hour,—

Induc'd me to pursue your steps : nay, more,

I wish'd to warn you 'gainst th' approaching storm,

That ev'n now gathers in the turbid air.

Lady. (aside.) He has seen no one, and I breathe
again.

(Aloud) Josceline, go forward, I will follow thee.

Lost in deep thought, I had not mark'd the storm ;

Yet, though no tim'rous thoughts my bosom share,

I'll take thy warning, and I thank thy care. [*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*Another part of the Forest, near the Castle of Fitzormond.
Time, Morning.*

*Lady FITZORMOND seated, her CHILD with a basket,
gathering flowers.*

To them, enter JOSCELINE, with a letter.

Lady. A letter?—and from whom?

Jos. (giving it). From Lord Fitzormond.

The messenger who brought it, was detain'd

By a strong party of the enemy

Which scours the country round : but just escap'd,

He brings this letter from my noble Master.

Lady (having read it). The words are few, but joyous
is their import.

Oh! bounteous Heav'n! what blessings dost thou shower

On me, and on my child! This, this surpasses

All that my fondest expectations form'd

Of happiness, when Fancy held the reins,

And sober Reason had resign'd her power!—

Josceline, thy lord will be with us ere noon.

Jos. 'Tis earlier than I had presum'd to hope.

Lady, forgive an aged servant's weakness ;—

But I can ill restrain, though in your presence,
Some drops of pleasure at my lord's return.

Lady. Seek not t' excuse what I know how to value.
Thy tears, good man, bespeak thine honest zeal;
And best congratulate Fitzormond's wife.

Jos. Some preparation will be needful, lady,
Which I must hence to forward.

Lady. Haste, oh haste!
Let gay festivity and music join
To celebrate th' event of this glad day!
Perhaps Fitzormond enters now the forest:
Do thou prepare; I will remain to greet him;
For he must pass us to attain the castle.

[*Exit JOSCELINE.*]

SCENE II.

Lady FITZORMOND, CHILD.

Lady. Rejoice, my child! my best-belov'd, rejoice!
Thy father comes to-day!

Child. And shall I see him?
I have almost forgot him.

Lady. What delight
Will soon be mine, to give thee to his arms,
And note the transports of paternal love!
Oh! when I think of all I have endur'd,
And of the blessed change which waits me now,
Lost in the wild extravagance of joy,
I am no more myself! Delicious dream!
If such thou art, oh, let me ever hold thee,

Nor e'er wake more to sad reality!

But hie! methought I heard approaching steps—

[Rises, and looks out.]

My child, thy father comes!

Fitzormond (without). Lead hence my horse.

I see her now, and will proceed on foot.

SCENE III.

FITZORMOND, Lady FITZORMOND, CHILD.

Fitz. My love!

[Embracing her.]

Lady. Thrice welcome, oh, my heart's best treasure!

Fitz. Sweet object of my soul's idolatry!

Balm of my life, Fitzormond's earthly heaven!

Have I attain'd this dear, long wish'd-for moment,

And do I clasp thee?

Lady. Oh! my sovereign good!

For whom so oft I've look'd, and look'd in vain,

Art thou return'd at last, to bless mine eyes,

And give this image of thyself a father?

Fitz. My darling boy! Let me embrace thee, too.

How is it? Art thou glad to see thy father?

Dost thou remember him, and wilt thou love him?

Child. I cannot say that I remember you;

But I shall love you, if you love mamma.

Fitz. What, wilt thou love me for thy mother's sake?

Child. Yes; and I'll give you all my prettiest flowers:

Woodbines, anemonies, and sweet wild-roses;

And many more whose names I do not know,

I found them in the wood ; but you shall have them,
If you will love mamma.

Fitz. I'll dearly love her ;
Yet though I thank thee for the gift, my child,
I will not so deprive thee of thy treasures.

Child. I pick'd them for mamma ; but now they're
yours ;

And I will seek for more in yonder brake.

Fitz. What is this music ? *[Music heard.]*

Lady. 'Tis for thy reception.

Our tenants long have pray'd for thy return ;
And have prepar'd with songs to welcome thee.
Wilt thou stay here to listen ?

Fitz. Willingly.
The song is sweet which gratitude inspires,
How mean so e'er the bard, or rough the lay.

SONG.

Set in night, thou baleful star
With malignant influence shining :
Waste no more our land with war,
Anarchy, and sad repining.

SEMI CHORUS.

Rise, propitious planet, rise,
Bright o'er Erin's beauteous isle !
Beaming from thy placid skies
Peace's sweet celestial smile,

DUETT.

Bid her sons no longer mourn,
Carnage o'er the land prevailing:
Bid fair Peace's wish'd return
Chase hence sorrow and bewailing.

CHORUS.

Rise, propitious planet, rise,
Bright o'er Erin's beauteous isle!
Beaming from thy placid skies,
Bid the happy nation smile!

Fitz. I thank thee, my Melania: thou hast studied
The means to make me welcome.

Lady. But, indeed,
In this I have no merit: when successful
In pleasing thee, I am best pleas'd myself.

A dance of Tenants' Children.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Another part of the Forest, as in Act I.

CHARLAMONT *sitting in a mournful posture.*

Char. Oh! what a night of horror have I pass'd!
Methought the spirits of the tempest hover'd
Around my couch, to mock me with repose;
And haunt my feverish slumbers with the visions
That most distract me, most unman my soul!

For, in the midst of my perturbed dreams,
Before mine eyes the ministers of death,
Of torture, rise, to tax me with rebellion,
And fouler murder,—Spectres glide before me,
And point at Charlamont, perdition's child !

[*Rising hastily.*

See ! there they glance amid the trees !—Avaunt !
Grim visions of a phrenzied mind, away !
Ye sting my soul to madness !—Phantoms, hence !
I'll bid a long adieu to fear and horror—
My constant soul shall see you all, unmot'd.
For why ?—This hand is deep in blood ; and fortified—
'Gainst all the threat'ning terrors ye prepare !
Then leave me !—So.—I am again alone.—
I would be still alone ; the dreary grave
Should be my darksome dwelling. There would I
Lie ever hidden from the sun's proud beam ;
For there my woes would cease, and all my shame
Be hid from all.—There, there alone, I look
For peace ; and yet,—an angel moves this way !
An angel sent me from the pitying skies !

SCENE V.

CHARLAMONT, *Lady FITZORMOND with a basket.*

Lady. Thou seest me true to mine appointment,
brother.

I bring thee the refreshments which I promis'd.

Char. (Wildly). Yes ; true.—Who art thou ? speak.

Lady. Thy fond Melania.

Dost thou not know me ?

Char. Pardon me,—thou com'st—

I had forgot. But no ; thou com'st to learn
More of my wretched story ; com'st prepar'd
To hate me, and to fly me far—for ever !—

Lady. Ah ! why these doubts of thy Melania's love ?

Char. Say, art thou still the same, the kind Melania,
The tender, fond companion of my youth ?

Oh ! then return—nor further tidings seek
Of a lost wretch, whom Hope herself forsakes !—
—But, trust me, though I fought, 'twas my intent
To take *his* life alone—— [*In a low and hurried voice.*]

Lady. Whose life ?

Char. Fitzormond's.

Curse on the sland'rous tongue that contradicts it !

Lady. Fitzormond's ?—Heav'ns ! What can my brother mean ?

Thou didst not fight with him !—He lives, is safe,—
Is here,—and is—oh Charlamont !—my husband !

Char. (*With surprise and horror*). Is he thy husband ?

Lady. Yes ; for shortly after

Thy flight from Erin, he address'd and won me ;
And Albion's isle beheld our plighted vows.
He brought me to my native land again,
The mistress of yon castle : ev'n the earth
Beneath thy feet, is his.

Char. (*After a pause*). Would that this earth
Would open, and receive me to its caverns !
That I no more might hear thee speak, Melania ;

No more might hear those petrifying sounds——

Thou art his wife!—My bitt'rest enemy's wife!

Lady. Thine enemy! What means my Charlamont?

Fitzormond is the friend of Charlamont—

The friend of all the good.

Char. Thou, thou his wife?—

Oh! thou hast fir'd my brain! Fitzormond, saidst thou?

No, no! Thou canst not be Fitzormond's wife!

Thou art too good—too fair. A match like that

In its own essence were impossible:

'Twere darkness link'd to light; the highest Heaven

Leagu'd with the lowest Hell!

Lady. What may this be?

Wherefore does thine outrageous tongue profane

The sacred tie that binds me to Fitzormond?

Fitzormond is the master of my heart:

Generous as great, he won my first affections

Ere Heav'n had 'reft me of a parent's care;

He wip'd the tear of anguish from mine eyes,

When fate pronounc'd me an unfriended wretch;

He took me, when the world had cast me off;

And by the sov'reign ties of boundless love,

And holy gratitude, enchain'd my soul!

Char. Each word thou utt'rest plants a dagger here!

[Striking his breast.

Oh sister! sister,—in my absence too!

Lady. Was I then wrong?

Char. If thou hast err'd, Melania——

Lady. If I have err'd? What mystery is this?——

If I have err'd, the blame is wholly thine!

Why did not Charlamont remain to guide me?

Why did my brother fly?

Char. Keen, keen reproach,
That justly brands me with deserv'd dishonour!
Why did I fly, indeed?—Why save a life
Now more than ever loath'd, since it is now
Unvalued, ev'n by thee!

Lady. Have I deserv'd
This harsh rebuke? O pardon me, my brother,
That I have hurt thee by my rash complaint.
Forgive too, that I plead Fitzormond's cause:
Remember,—he's my husband!

Char. I forgive thee?—
Say that he's not thy husband, and I'll bless thee!
Nay more, I'll kneel to thee, I'll do thee homage,
Kissing the dust thou tread'st on!—say, Melania,
But say,—thou'rt not his wife!

Lady. Oh! never, never!
Sooner, plague, famine, and disease shall rack me;
Sooner, deep shame and dire despair be mine;
Sooner shall madness fire my tortur'd brain,
Than I deny my marriage with Fitzormond!—
To me, he's all!—Th' indulgent hand of Heaven,
Though it profusely lavish'd bounties on me,
Could add no blessing when it gave me him—
Him, and his second self, my darling child,
Fitzormond's image, and Melania's joy!

Char. Hast thou a child? O teach him then, to curse
me!

Bid his young heart imbibe his father's hate;

His tongue lisp forth his father's imprecations
Upon the name of Charlamont.—My sister,
'Tis not Fitzormond's child, unless he curse me!

Lady. No, he shall bless thy name, my Charlamont;
For I will teach him all his mother's love.
But wherefore rack me with mysterious hints;
Yet keep me still in deepest ignorance?

Char. Shall I disclose the tenfold hideous truth,
And bid Melania's gentle spirit hate me?
Oh! rather go, since thou'rt Fitzormond's wife,
And rest in peaceful ignorance of my fate.
I cannot yet resolve to break a silence,
Awful as that which hovers o'er the tomb.—
Pity me, my Melania, my dear sister;—
I have not yet resolv'd to make thee hate me!

Lady. Wilt thou not speak? Some future day per-
haps——

Char. No! When the sun, his radiant head conceal'd,
Bids brooding darkness overspread the earth;
When the lone owl screams her nocturnal note,
And no intrusive ear can catch the sound—
Then, then, my sister, shall my tongue unfold
The dreadful tale in all its horrors clad,—
But, mark me!—not till then.

Lady. Be't as thou wilt,
Since thou perforce wilt cherish thine afflictions:
This night I'll visit thee; but now Fitzormond
Awaits me in the castle.—Charlamont,
Thou wilt not in with me?

Char. No, Heav'n forbid!

Lady. Heav'n then protect thee, and thy ways be-
friend ! *[Exeunt, severally.]*

SCENE VI.

Enter FITZORMOND hastily, followed by JOSCELINE.

Fitz. Traitor, recall thy words ! Taint not the air
With slander foul as this, lest, in the wrath
Thy calumnies inspire, I tear thee piecemeal,
And give thy mangled carcase for the food
Of wolves and carrion kites !—

Jos. Oh ! good my lord,
But deign to hear, and be thyself the judge.

Fitz. Yes, I will hear ; but on thy life, old man,
Breathe not a word to taint Melania's fame,
Pure as th' eternal snows on Alpine heights :
Nor let thy venom'd tongue asperse her faith ;—
'Tis firm as earth's sound base.

Jos. Alas, my lord !
Your rage misconstrues all, and bears you far
Beyond the object which I have in view.

Fitz. Dotard, what object that ?

Jos. I only mean,
Indeed, my lord, to rouse your circumspection,
Lest your too noble nature be abus'd
By easy faith, and misplac'd trust, perhaps,
In one—

Fitz. In one who merits all my trust :
On whose unspotted purity of soul
So firmly, so securely I rely,

That all thy malice can invent or urge,
Is lost upon me.—She's so deeply rooted
In my affection, that no earthly words
Would be of pow'r to shake my stedfast faith
In her true constancy, and matchless worth.
But to thy proofs: unless thou bring'st me these,
Thou lovest all my friendship,—all thy pains.

Jos. Proofs I perhaps have none: suspicions, such
As may amount to——

Fitz. Slave! and dar'st thou then
On mere suspicion thus presume to bring
Thine idle dreams to me?—Away!

Jos. My lord——

Fitz. What can'st thou urge in thy defence for this,
Presumptuous reptile?

Jos. I can nothing urge,
But that I am too prone, when duty calls,
And your dear honour is the cause in question,
Too prone, indeed, to think your wrongs mine own.
I have been long, I trust, a faithful servant
To you, my lord; nay, from my earliest years,
I serv'd your father with fidelity:—
'Tis hard, indeed,—now that old Age has strewn
His silv'ry honours o'er my drooping head,—
To find the meed of all my labours this;
To find my word discredited; mine age
With scorn and anger spurn'd; by him, from whom
I hop'd most kindness, and deserv'd most trust.
Pardon, my lord; these tears had not disgrac'd
My wither'd cheek, had you been just; but now,

Too late, I see that I was rashly bold,
When I attempted warning you against
The evils I foresee. And yet, my lord,
Believe me here ;—I prize your honour more
Than all the worthless world contains for me :
But here I end ; my too importunate love
Shall never trouble or offend you more. [Going.]

Fitz. Stay, Josceline, and let me now intreat,
As sure I ought, thy pardon. Good old man,
For worlds I would not hurt or injure thee ;
But trust me, every word of thy reproach
Has deeply wounded me.

Jos. You are too good.
Oh ! did I dare reproach you ? No ; my tongue,
However free, could never dare assume
So wide a license as to have reproach'd you !

Fitz. Here is my hand. Now, Josceline, declare,
(For much my curiosity is rais'd,
Though I disclaim all fear, and all distrust,)
What in thy lady's conduct thou hast noted,
To authorize the doubts thou fosterest ?

Jos. E'er since the day you brought your lovely bride
To proud Fitzormond's tow'rs, I've had, my lord,
At times, these same surmises. It is now,
I think, six years ago.

Fitz. It is ; proceed.
My heart accuses me of wronging her,
While I but listen to th' insidious tale.

Jos. Your lordship knows that she, at times, is plung'd
In fits of melancholy. These I noted ;

And much I thought, but never dar'd reveal
The doubts that fill'd my mind. Oft too, I found,
When you, my lord, were absent from the castle
T' attend the field, your lady would steal out,
Ev'n at the midnight hour, whene'er the moon
Had shed her tender radiance on the earth.
Long time I knew not where she bent her steps;
But took occasion, once, to watch at distance.
Last night I mark'd her, near this lonely spot,
Sitting beside yon rivulet that winds
Its way among the woods. Her lovely head,
In mournful seeming, rested on one hand;
While in the other she a picture held,
Which from her bosom she with fondness took,
And wept as she caress'd it.

Fitz. Josceline,

Art thou assur'd she then no picture held
Which bore thy lord's resemblance?

Jos. Well assur'd;

For on the mossy turf I softly stole,
And gaz'd, unseen, upon the sacred treasure;
It bore the semblance of a youthful hero,
But was not yours, my lord.

Fitz. Proceed; for now

I own myself perplex'd.—(*Aside.*) Nay, ev'n alarm'd.

Jos. All this, your lordship well may think, amaz'd me.
But now a newer matter of surprise
Arose before me. Yesternight I saw,
Here, on this spot, a stranger with your lady,
In earnest converse, often with embraces
And fond endearments mingled.

Fitz. Josceline, hush! —

This last brings ~~unhappy~~ unhappy ~~news~~ news to ~~my~~ my ~~mind~~ mind! —
Yet I will bear that ~~firmly~~ firmly: and ~~then~~ then, ~~the sword~~ the sword
Shall point the way to vengeance on their ~~head~~ head!

Jos. Talk not of vengeance, ~~and my lord~~ and my lord ~~unless~~
The ~~words~~ words were clear. Remember, ~~now~~ now, I meant
Alone t' ~~avert~~ avert your ~~caution~~ caution: not ~~perjure~~ perjure —
Your angry sword t' ~~avenge~~ avenge your lady's life!
But all I know I have already ~~said~~ said,
Save that my lady ~~promis'd~~ promis'd, ere she part'd,
To meet him here at noon.

Fitz. A new appointment?
Death to my peace! he lurks about us then.
This wood, perhaps, conceals him. How! at noon?
The hour's already past.

Jos. It is, my lord.
My lady, too, was absent from the castle
Precisely at the time. I could not gain
Your lordship's patient hearing earlier,
Or you had not been ignorant till now.

Fitz. I cannot blame thee, Josceline, for ev'n now
I grieve that ignorance is mine no more!
Fare thee well, Josceline, I would be alone.

[*Exit JOSCELINE.*]

SCENE VII.

Manet FITZORMOND.

Why, why am I to learn a tale like this?
A tale so fraught with ruin to my hopes?

How a few words that alienate esteem,
 Graft sour suspicion on love's tender stem!—
 I loathe a life of jealous vigilance;
 But would discreetly act, while doubt can be
 Of her disloyalty: yet, if to-night
 She venture forth again to meet this stranger,
 This dark, unknown destroyer of my peace—
 No more! for now she comes, with sweetest wiles
 To twine about my heart; and make it doubt
 If, in a form where heav'nly beauty reigns,
 Aught but the purest virtue can inhabit!

SCENE VIII.

FITZORMOND, *Lady FITZORMOND*, CHILD.

Fitz. Whence comes Melania? Where has she been
 wand'ring?

Lady. We have been ranging through the woods to
 seek thee:

Why dost thou leave us thus, unkind Fitzormond?
 Art thou so late return'd to thy fond wife;
 To thy glad home; to this delighted cherub;
 And yet so quickly weary of our love,—
 Our joy to see thee?

Fitz. (Aside.) Let me, if I can,
 Play the dissembler, even as herself!
(Aloud.) Nay, my Melania, do not doubt my love.
 It ever lives! It warms this faithful breast
 With all a husband's, all a father's fondness.
 Believe, what I experience is no feign'd,

No artful passion ; but the genuine flame,
The sacred ardour of unfading love,
Inspired by thee, and offspring of thy virtues !

Lady. How precious is this kindness to my soul !
Oh ! my Fitzormond ! it revives the sense
Of joy, long dead within my drooping heart !
Ah ! could'st thou know the rapture it inspires,
Thou ne'er wouldst leave me, more, a prey to grief !

Fitz. Oh dear deceit ! oh flattering words of love !
(*Aside.*) But now I'll put their meaning to the test.
(*Aloud.*) And deem'st thou I again would leave thy side,
For all the honours in my sov'reign's gift ?
No, dear Melania : henceforth, when the duties
I owe my country, force me to resign
Fitzormond's peaceful shades, thy tenderness,—
Thy love, shall cheer my dreary way ; again
Thou shalt not pine in solitude and grief.

Lady. Heav'n bless thee, ever, for those soothing
words,

My generous Fitzormond ! Come, my child ;
And twine thy little arms around his neck,
To thank thy father for this promis'd blessing.
Indeed your words have fill'd me with a joy [*To Fitz.*
I cannot e'er express ; my gratitude
For this indulgence shall be like your goodness ;
And own no limits !

Fitz. (*Aside.*) She can ne'er be guilty ;
I'll not believe it. (*Aloud.*) Dearest love, thy hand.
We'll seek the castle, for the banquet waits.
Give me thy hand, my child. Be blest this day,

Which sees me thus restor'd to all I love!—
While others seek for riches or renown,
Yet find no pleasures they can call their own;
Be't still my fortune, wheresoe'er I roam,
To find my real happiness—at home!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Forest ; Night.

Enter CHARLAMONT and Lady FITZORMOND.

Lady. The trees are dropping with unwholesome
dews ;

And the slow bat wings to his ivy'd nest.
Now, Charlamont, begin the tale of woe
Whose menac'd horrors have appall'd my soul.

Char. Lo ! the wan moon, dismay'd, has hid in clouds
Her pallid face, reluctant to behold me !
The glittering starry host refuse their beams,
Their cheering beams, to illumine th' uncertain path
Of such a wretch as I. Now, my Melania,
Art thou prepar'd to hear the dread narration
Of all thy brother's miseries, all his crimes ?

Lady. His crimes ! Ah me ! what has my brother
done ?

Char. Nay, nay, when thou hast heard the fearful
truth,
Thou ne'er wilt own me for thy brother more.
That term shall bring reproach and shame upon thee ;

And thou eternal infamy shalt see :
Link'd with the name, to stigmatize thy race !

Lady. Speak, speak ! this dire suspense is tenfold
anguish.

Wherefore should I disown my brother ?

Char. (wildly.) Hah !

Dost thou not know me for a murderer ?
Nay, is not villain in each feature written
Of this accursed face ? Are not these hands
Imbrued in blood,—the blood of guileless innocence ?

Lady. Oh, heav'n !

Char. And wilt thou own me for a brother ?

No, rather leave me to the fate I merit,—
To all the pangs of fruitless, late remorse :
Or if thou needs wilt stay,—stay here to curse me !
Yet, in mute wonder, now prepare to hear
What everlasting silence must conceal.
A tale too dreadful for the ear of day,
And best breath'd forth amid the glooms of night.
List then, Melania. Ere inglorious flight
Urg'd me, for safety, far from all I lov'd,
Thou know'st I fought ; yes, with thy husband fought,
And left him, as I deem'd, bereft of life.
Our cause of quarrel this ;—Fitzormond look'd.
With the proud eye of arrogant contempt,
On one he, falsely, term'd Hibernia's foe !
For 'mid the civil broils that tore our land,
'Twas mine to join the cause of liberty.
'Twas mine (with pride I own it) to lead forth
Those daring champions of our country's freedom,

Who fought on Wexford's plains, and greatly fell,
Defending rights which God and nature gave !
Proud boast ! which yet has pow'r to fire my soul,
And renovate the hero's ardours here !

[Striking his heart.]

Vain boast, alas ! too soon was Charlamont,
By fatal chance of war, Fitzormond's captive.
Yet, mid the dreary hours of sad confinement,
Fair Annabel would cheer my prison's glooms ;
The sister of Fitzormond, form'd to win,
By matchless softness, ev'n the savage heart ;
With pity mark'd my now inglorious state,
And prais'd the valour of my young achievements.
Blooming with youthful loveliness and grace,
She seem'd a heav'nly messenger of bliss !
Could I do less than love her ? Nay, Melania,
The heart she gave, 'twas luxury to hold,
(The heart she gave, 'twas agony to lose !)
The heart she gave was more than the reward
Of all that dauntless valour could achieve,
Or constancy could suffer : 'twas, indeed,
A commutation sweet for liberty !
Yet, through her means, ev'n that was mine again.
Ah ! fatal freedom ! ill exchange'd for bondage !
We fled together from Fitzormond's power ;—
We fled, and were pursued. Yes, my Melania ;
Ere Heaven's sacred sanction could be lent
To our disastrous loves, Fitzormond came—
He came to force her from me,—Oh !—for breath,
For breath to tell the rest !

Lady. Oh, Charlamont!
My list'ning soul hangs eager on thy accents,
And longs, yet dreads to hear!

Char. My sins deserve
That I should have this bitter tale to tell:
Yea, more, that I should have to tell it thee!
But what, my gentle sister, have been thine;
And how hast thou deserv'd to hear it told?

Lady. Proceed, and if thou canst, relate it quickly;
For mine exhausted spirits warn me hence,
Lest, ere 'tis ended, they should wholly fail me.

Char. I will be brief. Inflam'd with rage, he sought,
Fitzormond sought, and found us. In that hour,
For ever curs'd, when anger undisguis'd,
Disdain, reproaches mutual, pride, revenge,
And deadly hatred urg'd us,—in that hour
We fought:—a bloody and remorseless conflict!
For Annabel, the tender Annabel,
Eager to save, and screaming to restrain us,
Rush'd in, and ran between our driving swords!—
Mine pierc'd her!—Oh! be calm, my swelling heart,
Till I have told—oh! yet one pause for grief,
For love, and—murder'd Annabel!

Lady. (*Starting.*) She died?

Char. Yes, as the saint she liv'd: with pray'rs for
both,
Her pure soul left its beauteous tenement,
Yet has black calumny aspers'd her fame,
Because she fled, and ere the holy altar
Could make us one, breath'd forth her spotless soul.

And curst Fitzormond countenanc'd the slander,
Because she fled with me!—with Charlamont,
His foe confest, the daring son of freedom!—
Conceive what agonies of soul were mine,
When I beheld her at my feet expire!
Conceive the whirlwind of my passions then,—
The fury of my vengeance on Fitzormond!
Wild with new griefs, with added spurs to wrath,
I flew a raging lion on my foe!
Despair lent vigour to my strong-nerv'd arm:
I slew him, as I thought, and joy'd to think it!—
Ah! why had I not, rather, slain myself?

Lady. Oh day of woe! day of transcendent horror!

Char. 'Twas on that day I left my native isle:

My flight allow'd no time for seeing thee.
Solely I penn'd three hasty lines to her,—
The honour'd parent whom I thus had sham'd,
To warn her from a country where her name,
Rever'd till then, was grown a general mark
For scorn to smile, and obloquy to hoot at!
Further, I pray'd her never to enquire
The fate of him whom once she call'd her son;
Besought her, as she valued bliss for thee,
Th' exalted name of Charlamont to quit,
For one less known, less honour'd,—less disgrac'd.

Lady. Yes, thy mysterious mandate was obey'd:
She left her country, friends, and family;
Exchang'd her proud, her honourable name;
Sought Albion's shores, and died!

Char. Oh! grief of heart!

My mother! and was this the recompense
Of all thy kind, indulgent cares for me?

Lady. Thou wast her only son; when she had lost
thee,

Life lost its charms, and hope itself was dead.

Char. Oh Charlamont!—detested parricide!—
But I must think no more!—Melania, say,
What was thy fate when thus an orphan left,
By all deserted, in a foreign land?
Who dried the tear of sorrow on thy cheek?
Who guarded thee from all surrounding ills?
Who stood my sister's friend? [*Taking her hand.*]

Lady. Fitzormond.

Char. (*Abruptly dropping her hand.*) He?

Lady. Yes, and my dying mother's voice approv'd
him.

Then start not at a name so justly lov'd.

Char. (*Disdainfully.*) I hate the name.

Lady. Believe me, thou dost wrong him.
And thou wilt own thy judgment too severe,
When thou shalt learn with what fond, filial care,
He watch'd thy dying parent's pillow. Oh!
In friendship to my mother, love to me,
He was the son, the brother we had lost!
Char. (*Aside.*) Another deep, yet undesign'd re-
proach!
Lady. Once, and but once, he mention'd his dead
sister;
But check'd himself, as if the subject pain'd him;
And we forbore to press it.

Char. (Abstractedly.) Ye did well.—
Tended upon her death-bed by my foe !
Oh ! pangs unfelt before ! Severe decree
Of angry Heav'n to punish and confound me !
Fitzormond triumphs in fulfilling duties
Which nature made it mine to have perform'd !
Relentless Fate, yet art thou satiated,
Or hast thou still fresh chastisement in store ?

Lady. (Looking out.) My Charlamont, I fear—

Char. What fears my sister ?

Lady. Methought, but now, I heard approaching
steps.

Char. Fear nothing : I will guard thee with my life.

Lady. Oh ! I am terror all, and wild alarm !

My brother—

Char. I conjure thee, name me not.

Lady. Not name thee ? Think, oh think ! should I
be found

At this late hour conversing with a stranger,—
A nameless stranger too, in this lone wood,—
What fatal stains would fix upon my name !

SCENE II.

Lady FITZORMOND, CHARLAMONT, FITZORMOND *behind.*

Char. Fly then, and leave me : one embrace, and part.

Lady. I'm lost for ever ! Fear, and dreaded shame,
Which urge my absence, still oppose my flight.
My limbs refuse their aid ; my sorrowing heart
Aches thus to leave thee—

Fitz. Art thou, then, so fond?

Lady. Oh! 'tis my husband's voice!

Fitz. (*Advancing.*) No, treach'rous woman!
No more thy husband, but thy direst foe;
I bring hot vengeance on my dagger's point,
And thus— [*Attempts to strike her; she shrieks.*

Lady. Oh!

Char. (*Interposing.*) Hold, dark villain! nor presume
With impious hand to strike that lady's heart,
The seat of virtues thou canst never reach.

Fitz. Who talks of virtue with so loud a tongue,
Yet dares infringe a husband's sacred rights?
Who meets my wife, here, at the midnight hour,
Yet thunders villain in Fitzormond's ears?

Char. Ev'n I; and boldly I'll proclaim myself
No foe of virtue, though no friend of thine.

Fitz. Too well I know thee none, thou base betrayer!
I recognise thy voice; and, if strong guilt
Rorbid not the avowal, speak thy name.

Char. 'Twould nought avail thee. Be thou satisfied,
Thy lady's innocent.

Lady. O speak thy name;
Or let *me* speak it, for my vindication!

Fitz. What vindication hop'st thou for thyself,
Perfidious trait'ress!—Hence, with thy vile paramour;
And ne'er approach me more!

Lady. He is my brother!

Fitz. Oh! wretched artifice to screen deep guilt!
Invention mean as false! Peace, frail one, peace!
Nor dream thy frauds shall e'er again deceive me.

Char. Worthless defamer of thy wife's fair name,—
Wanton destroyer of thine own soul's peace,
Restrain thy wrath.—By Heav'n, she tells thee true.—
I *am* her brother!

Fitz. She has *none*, impostor!
Think'st thou this base, this coward subterfuge,
Shall serve t' appease an injur'd husband's wrath?—
Yet, ere my thirsty weapon drinks thy blood,
Tell me thy name, that I may know my foe!

Char. Now, by th' effulgent sun that soon shall rise
To gild yon eastern hills, while I have power
To hide it from thee, thou shalt never know it!

Fitz. Is then thy birth so low, and so degraded,
So close allied to shame, thou dar'st not own it?
Go, sordid wretch, contemptible as base!
Fitzormond will not stain his righteous sword,
The sacred champion of Hibernia's laws,
With blood so vile, so infamous as thine!

Char. Would it were so! Would that my state had
been
So vile, that slander's self could scarce degrade,
So low, that foul disgrace could ne'er befall it!
But learn, proud peer, that such was not my fortune.
I had a name which I with pride avow'd,
Which all with reverence heard; but now 'tis lost;
For I have sunk it in sepulchral night,
And bade eternal silence rest upon it.

SCENE III.

FITZORMOND, CHARLAMONT, *Lady FITZORMOND*, JOS-
CELINE, *with a light.*

Jos. Pardon, my lord, the fond officious zeal
With which I have presum'd to follow you :
The noise I heard while waiting in the wood,
Awaken'd apprehensions for your safety,—

Fitz. Give me thy light ! Now, by the pow'rs above,
I'll know my enemy ! [*Holds the light to Charlamont.*

Hah ! Charlamont !—

Base and detested rebel, is it thou ?

Char. (*Half drawing, and then sheathing his sword.*)
Ev'n so ; for, as the husband of my sister,
Fitzormond may insult me thus,—and live.

Fitz. Scourge of my life ! do I behold thee here ?
Say, hell-born traitor, was it not enough
My sister fell the victim of thy treachery ?
Could not her death appease thy vengeful hate,—
But must thou wound me in a dearer part,
Ev'n in the honour of the wife I love ?

Char. Forbear with foul and undeserv'd reproach
To taint the memory of the maid I lov'd.
By Heav'n, her soul was purity itself ;
Nor shall the wretch exist who dares traduce her !
As for my sister there, the drifting snow
That flies by night o'er the untrodden waste,
Bears not a heart of more unsullied whiteness.
Golconda's mines contain no gem more pure,

More perfect than her faith : she never err'd
But when she gave her spotless hand to thee !

Fitz. Insulting villain, thou shalt pay me this !

Char. Come on then. I am weary of existence,
And gladly shall resign the life I hate :
It is not worth defending.

Good old man, [To Josceline.

Haste with thy lady hence : it is not meet,
Her eyes be shock'd by such a scene as this.

Jos. Lady, will't please you go ?

Lady. How ? go, and leave

My brother thus defenceless, here, to perish ?
Oh ! never, never !—Spare my brother's life, [*Kneels.*
Fitzormond, I conjure thee, on my knees !

Fitz. Dost thou then plead for my sworn enemy,
And term th' accursed Charlamont thy brother ?
Take, rather, the reward of all thy crimes,
The thanks thou hast deserv'd from him thou'st wrong'd.

[Attempts to stab her.

Char. (*Interposing, wounds him with the poniard he
had wrested from his hand.*)

Monster ! I'll save thy soul one crime at least,
And spare thee the remorse of having kill'd her.
Die—by my hand !

Fitz. (*Sinks down.*) Too sure I feel the blow !
Now, Charlamont, rebellion's boastful son,
And dark assassin,—art thou satisfied ?

Lady. Oh ! Charlamont, what fury prompted thee
To do this deed of unexampled horror ?

Char. Thou know'st thy safety only could, my sister.

Lady. What was *my* safety, when compar'd with his ?
 Rash brother, why didst thou attempt to save me ?
 Had I but died by my Fitzormond's hand,
 I had been happy.—Oh ! thou hast undone me !
 My dear, my murder'd lord, oh ! raise thine eyes,
 And give thy lost Melania but one look
 That may speak pardon to her tortur'd heart !
 I have not wrong'd thee : Charlamont himself
 Forbade me e'er to name him as my brother.—
 O fatal caution !—fatally obey'd !

Fitz. Does she I sought to murder, mourn for me ?

Lady. Ah ! Heav'n bear witness to the pangs I feel
 To see thee thus, my husband !—Oh ! my brother,
 Behold thy work !

Jos. Oh, 'tis a bloody deed !
 My honour'd lord—yet he perhaps may live.

Lady. Oh ! let us haste to bear him gently hence.

Fitz. Nay, let me die ev'n here. There is no pow'r
 In art or nature to redeem my life.
 Mourn not, Melania, that my hour is come :
 Heav'n has, in mercy, snatch'd me from the earth
 To save my soul from the tremendous crime
 Of giving death to thee.—Canst thou forgive
 That I believ'd thee guilty ?—

Lady. Oh, my husband !—
 Tears choke my utt'rance—that I do forgive thee,
 This fond embrace shall testify. Ah, wherefore,
 With fatal rashness, wak'd I thy suspicions ?

Char. Wherefore, but through my means ? O Char-
 lamont !

Born the blind instrument of hell, to scourge
 Alike thy dearest friends and fellest foes,—
 Why, when thou fledst to India's distant climes,
 Did not eternal slavery await thee ?
 Why, when thou sought'st, again, Europa's shores,
 Did not the angry ocean's waves engulf thee :—
 Fitzmormond, now, that, hovering o'er thy lips,
 Pale Death asserts his victim—may a wretch,
 Conscious, too late, how deeply he has injur'd
 Thee, and thy heart's best im'rests, plead for pardon ?

Fitz. Thou'st sav'd Melania's life :—here is my hand.

Char. Fitzmormond, why,—why were we ever foes ?

Fitz. Melania—Heav'n protect thee,—and my child !
 'Tis past.—Farewell, my love ! this parting pang,—
 And I am gone—Oh ! Heav'n have mercy—Oh ! [*Exit.*

Lady. He's gone, he's gone for ever !

Jos. (*after a pause*). Oh, my lord !

My honour'd—murder'd master ! wast thou spar'd
 By the rude hand of all-destroying war,
 To fall, inglorious, in thine own domain,
 Ev'n at the moment when thy joys seem'd full ?
 Sad, piteous sight !—My lady sinking, too,
 Beneath the weight of grief !—How shall I act ?
 How draw her from this state of death-like sorrow ?
 Stranger,—Lord Charlamont—

Char. (*starting*). What wouldst thou of me ?

Jos. Excuse me, lord ; behold my lady faints.

Char. Wouldst thou bring consolation to my sister,
 Haste, seek her child : her dear-lov'd infant's voice,
 Perhaps, may rouse the latent powers of sense,

And waken all the mother in her heart.

I'll stay to guard her.

Jos. I obey.

[Exit, leaving the light.]

SCENE IV.

*Lady FITZORMOND insensible, near the corpse of FITZ-
ORMOND, CHARLAMONT.*

Char. Ah wherefore

Have I no source of consolation left?—

Because I have deserv'd none!—Oh, Melania!

Pale, pale thou liest as life itself were flown—

Thy lips have livid death impress'd upon them;

An icy coldness has benumb'd thy veins;—

[Taking her hand.]

And pow'rless nature yields to mighty grief!—

Shall this be so?—and art thou gone, my sister?

And diest thou by the hand of Charlamont?

Yea, thou dost die—I lose thee, and for ever!

Oh! for one fresh, reviving breeze from Heav'n,

Of pow'r to tell me, my Melania lives!

Hah!—let me think!—yet, water may restore her.—

Grey twilight tinges yonder eastern hills,

And soon the sun will mount th' illumin'd skies:

Could I but find the stream that skirts the wood—

Thrice blessed orb!

[Looking out.]

Thanks to thy dawning beams,

I see it now!—Melania, yet I'll save thee! [Exit.]

SCENE V.

The sun rises.

Manet Lady FITZORMOND near the body of FITZORMOND: after a pause, she raises herself on her hands, looking around her with astonishment and terror.

Lady. Where am I? What strange visions throng
my mind,

And strike upon my agonizing brain?

What is this place? And whence the fearful images

That rise, in gloomy retrospect, to view?

Are not impressions horrible as these,

The wild precursors of impending phrenzy?

Oh, let me check that thought!—I have but dream'd;—

But oh, ye pow'rs! what ghastly dreams were mine!

Methought I saw the corse of my Fitzormond!—

Methought I saw—Oh! Sight of blasting horror!

And art thou here again?

[Seeing the corpse, she screams, and sinks upon it.

SCENE VI.

Re-enter CHARLAMONT, with water in his hat.

Char. Now, my lov'd sister,

Once to behold thee, once to hear thee speak,—

And then, to take an everlasting leave—

Lady (starting). Who comes?—Where's Charlamont?

Char. High heav'n be prais'd!

She lives, she speaks,—and speaks of Charlamont!

Here, here behold thy brother, my Melania,
A suppliant for pardon.

Lady (points to the body). Look on this !

Char. Oh, fly far hence, Melania ! shun this scene !

Lady. This is my pillow of eternal rest :
Sorrow, and solitude, and I dwell here ;
And what can bring thee near us ? Hie thee hence !
This spot is sacred to despair alone.

Char. Then the despair I prove, should mark it mine.
Dost thou refuse the partnership of sorrow
To thy unhappy brother, my Melania ?

Lady. Have I a brother ?

Char. Cruel, cruel question !
Yet, let me not repine, I have deserv'd it !
Melania casts her brother off,—for ever !

Lady. Oh, it had slipp'd my mind : I have a brother ;
True ; and I wear his picture in my breast,
That I may wash it with eternal tears.
Oh ! that I should forget I had a brother !—
But thou, beware lest he should find thee here ; [*Wildly.*
For know, his hands are steep'd in human gore ;
And he will take thy life !

Char. What means my sister ?

Lady (with vehemence). Away !—if Charlamont
should find thee here—
But mark me !—do not let him know I warn'd thee ;
For then, he'll murder me !—Hah ! I should know thee !
Art thou not Charlamont himself ?—Alas !
My wand'ring senses ever thus deceive me ;
For as I gaz'd this moment on thy face,
I took thee for my brother ! Thou wilt smile ;

But I could weep to think it. Yet, forgive me :
I know not what I say, nor where I am ;
For sorrow weighs so heavy on my heart,
That Memory is driven from her seat.
'Twill all be over soon.—

Char. Oh, agony !

Lady. Nay, ask me not who kill'd him ; 'tis a secret
That I must hide for ever from the world ;
But, if thou wilt, I am content to die,—
To die, and hide it, ever, in my breast.
Yet something, still, I have to say to thee,—
Something that presses here,—upon my heart—
For which, indeed, alone I wish to live.
I fain would ask of thee—but 'tis forgotten !
I now have lost all pow'r of recollection ;
And it is gone—Oh ! my perplexed brain !

Char. My sister, can I see thee thus, and live ?
Oh, Reason ! struggle yet to keep thy throne
Within my tortur'd mind ! Flow, stream of agony ;
Flow—tears of blood !

Lady. Stranger, where is my child ?—
How ? dead ?—and have they murder'd thee, my babe ?
Yea, and thy father too ! *[Sinks on the body.]*

Char. He lives, my sister !
Wherefore thus tardy, Josceline ? *[Looking out anxiously.]*

Lady (rising, and looking on all sides). Oh, where ?
Where ?—where ? Thou canst not point my infant out ?
Then leave me.—He's no more !

Char. O my Melania !
How shall I banish these ungrounded fears ?

Lady. Shew me his tomb, and I will sit beside it.

Lead me to where his little head has rest !
 Do not distrust me : I'll be calm, and still,
 And mute as Silence' self.—I'll go with thee ;
 And thou shalt point me out the sacred spot :
 I'll sit and weep beside it—strewing, still,
 Fresh-gather'd flow'rs upon his early grave.
 They'll all be moisten'd by a mother's tears.
 But I'll be careful too,—oh ! how I'll watch,
 That harm shall ne'er approach my infant more !
 Come, then.—Nay, nay, 'tis not for thee to weep !—
 Sorrow, and pain, and agony, are mine !
 Thou hast no claim to them ;—thou ne'er hast known
 What 'tis to feel the deadliest wound, inflicted
 Ev'n on the tend'rest fibres of thy heart !

SCENE VII.

Enter JOSCELINE with the CHILD. CHARLAMONT runs to meet them, and brings the CHILD to Lady FITZ-ORMOND.

Char. (With momentary exultation). Oh, lift thy languid eyes, and bless me still !

Lady (Looking up, and embracing the Child). And art thou here, my all of life that's left ?

Has Heav'n restor'd thee to my mourning heart ?

Jos. Yes, lady ; Heav'n, in pity to your griefs,
 Has sent your child to save you from despair.

Lady. I thought thee dead, my boy ; and lo ! I clasp thee !

To God be all the praise !

[*Kneels.*

Char. Her wand'ring sense

Returns :—O God ! I praise—I thank thee too !

Lady (*Rising hastily*). Come thou, my heart's sole
consolation ! Come !

We from this dark abode of death must fly ;
Lest, brooding o'er the horrors of this night,
Perpetual Madness fix her dwelling here—

[*Putting her hand to her forehead.*]

Jos. Fly, lady, fly : this is no scene for you :

I'll stay to guard my honour'd lord's remains.

Lady. How shall I bid those sad remains farewell ?

(*Goes to the corpse of FITZORMOND, kneels, and
takes one of the hands, which she kisses with fer-
vent affection. After a short pause ;*)

Though thou, my life, my bosom's lord, be thus
Extended cold in death ;—oh ! did I dare,
Still on thy bloodless features would I gaze,
Till sight grew dim, and sense itself decay'd.
But—precious pledge of my lost partner's love !—
This innocent child remains ; and I for him
Must think, must act, and must submit—Farewell !

[*In a faltering voice.*]

Char. (*Following her*). Yet, if the sight of one so
criminal

Blast not thy view,—turn, oh Melania ! turn,
And look on Charlamont !

Lady. What would my brother ?

Char. One last embrace, that may assure my soul,—
My parting soul,—thou dost not hate my memory.

Lady. Yes, this embrace I give ; but why the last ?
If thou remain, none will betray thee here.

Char. My sister, I shall never hear thy voice,
Never behold thee more !

Lady. Oh, Charlamont !
My heart acquits thee of delib'rate ill,
And deems thee luckless, more than criminal :
Else should I shrink in horror from thine arms,
As I were an accomplice in misdeeds.
Be reconcil'd then, to thyself. Thy sister,
Without a crime, may shelter and protect thee.

Char. Thy goodness with my ill contrasted so,
Shews it but more atrocious. Oh, farewell !
For I must hence—

Lady. But whither ?

Char. Ask not that :
I scarcely know, myself, my destination ;
But thou wilt know it soon.

Lady. Why must we part ?

Char. We must for ever part ;—but not in wrath ?

Lady. Oh ! not in wrath ! No ; may the God of Mercy
Forgive, as I do, all your errors here !

Char. Farewell, Melania—oh ! farewell for ever !

[*Exit Lady, with the Child.* *Char.* follows her
some steps, then sinks on the earth.

SCENE VIII. *and last.*JOSCELINE, CHARLAMONT *near the body of FITZORMOND.*

Jos. No, I can ne'er enough lament the rashness
Of my mistaken zeal to serve my lord!
Nor can I e'er to his sad shade atone
The injuries my folly has brought on him!
Why did I kindle in his noble breast
The heart-consuming fire of jealousy?
Lo! there he lies—lies weltering in his blood,
The victim of my well-meant aim to serve him!
But what avail these fruitless self-reproaches?
Let me, at least, assist this wretched youth
T' escape the fate that must await him here.

[Approaching Char.]

Lord Charlamont, the day advances fast.
Rise, I beseech thee; fly this blood-stain'd spot;
For soon th' events of this detested night
Will all be blaz'd abroad. If thou'rt discover'd,
Thou know'st offended justice asks thy life—

Char. Who calls me from the precincts of the tomb
To warn from justice, and to prate of life?
Life is my bitterest foe.—Is't thou, old man?
Why dost thou break the silence of the dead?

Jos. I would persuade thee to preserve thy life
By flight: if thou remainest here, thou'rt lost.

Char. Am I not lost to happiness already?
And wouldst thou have me live to misery?
Where is my sister? Ah! she's gone for ever!

She leaves me to the furies that surround me !
No parting look she gave, nor seem'd to know
That hell and Charlamont still linger'd here !

Jos. Pardon me, lord ; she left you with regret,
And pray'd for Heav'n's forgiveness of your sins.

Char. How? did she pray for him who stabb'd her
peace?

Oh! save me from that thought, though by distraction!
But no, it will not be! Yet, deep Remorse
Has in my bosom fix'd his iron fangs,
And plac'd this fearful sight before mine eyes,

[*Pointing to the corpse.*

To speak confusion to my guilty soul!
And dire Despair shall halloo in mine ears
Melania's name: yea, haunt me with the shade
Of injur'd Annabel.—*Her image points*
The desp'rate remedy for desp'rate ills.

[*Takes the dagger from the corpse*

This is the gift which pitying Phrenzy offers
To the desponding child of misery.
Oh! 'tis a gift which Reason might accept,
Could Reason e'er exist with griefs like mine!
Now, Justice, summon—Punishment, await me!
I scorn, and thus do I escape your power!

[*Stabs himself.*

Jos. (*Advancing from the back scene*). Hold thy mis-
guided hand!—Unhappy youth!

What hast thou done?

Char. Away, and let me die!

Go, tell Melania that I have aveng'd her.—

Oh! what a pang was that!—Fitzormond, say,—

Invet'rate foe,—now, art thou reconcil'd;
And shall we be at peace? Shall the cold tomb
Now close, for ever, on our deadly hate?
And thou, Melania,—sister of my love!
Perhaps, when time has soften'd thine affliction,
Thou may'st remember, I was once thy brother,
And once deserv'd the name. Now, Annabel,—
Fitzormond, now, I come. Oh! pardon, Heaven!
That I have liv'd the scourge of all I love,
And died, as I do now—Oh!— [Dies.

Jos. Ill-starr'd youth!

In that last deep-drawn sigh his spirit fled!
Is this the end of every sanguine hope
His mother cherish'd for her fav'rite child?
Unhappy mother, cruelly deceiv'd!
She saw not that his life would prove her curse;
But still with blind indulgence nurs'd the seeds
Of baleful passions, which in early youth
Inflam'd his mind, and threaten'd future woe.

Behold th' impetuous tide of wrathful blood,
Uncheck'd in youth by her maternal care,
In age mature boils up with foaming flood,
To overwhelm him deep in ruin and despair,
And bid his hapless race in all his mis'ries share!

THE CURTAIN DROPS.

MALEK ADHEL;

THE

Champion of the Crescent.

(100-102)

103



MALEK ADHEL;
THE
CHAMPION OF THE CRESCENT.

A TRAGIC DRAMA.

In Three Acts.

*Adapted for representation from the celebrated Crusade-
Romance of Mathilde, by Madame Cottin.*

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY PERMISSION,

TO HER GRACE

THE DOWAGER DUCHESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SARACENS.

SALADIN the Great, Sultan of Egypt.

MALEK ADHEL, his Brother, Governor of Cesarea.

KALÉD, Friend of Malek Adhel.

CHRISTIANS.

LUSIGNAN, King of Jerusalem, dethroned by the Saracens.

ANSELM, Archbishop of Tyre.

DEMAS, Lusignan's Esquire, formerly a Mussulman.
Guards.

WOMEN.

MATILDA, Sister of Richard *Cœur de Lion*, King of England.

HERMINIA, a lady attending on the Princess Matilda.

The Scene lies in and near the city of Cesarea, in Palestine.

PROLOGUE,

AS SPOKEN AT THE REPRESENTATION.

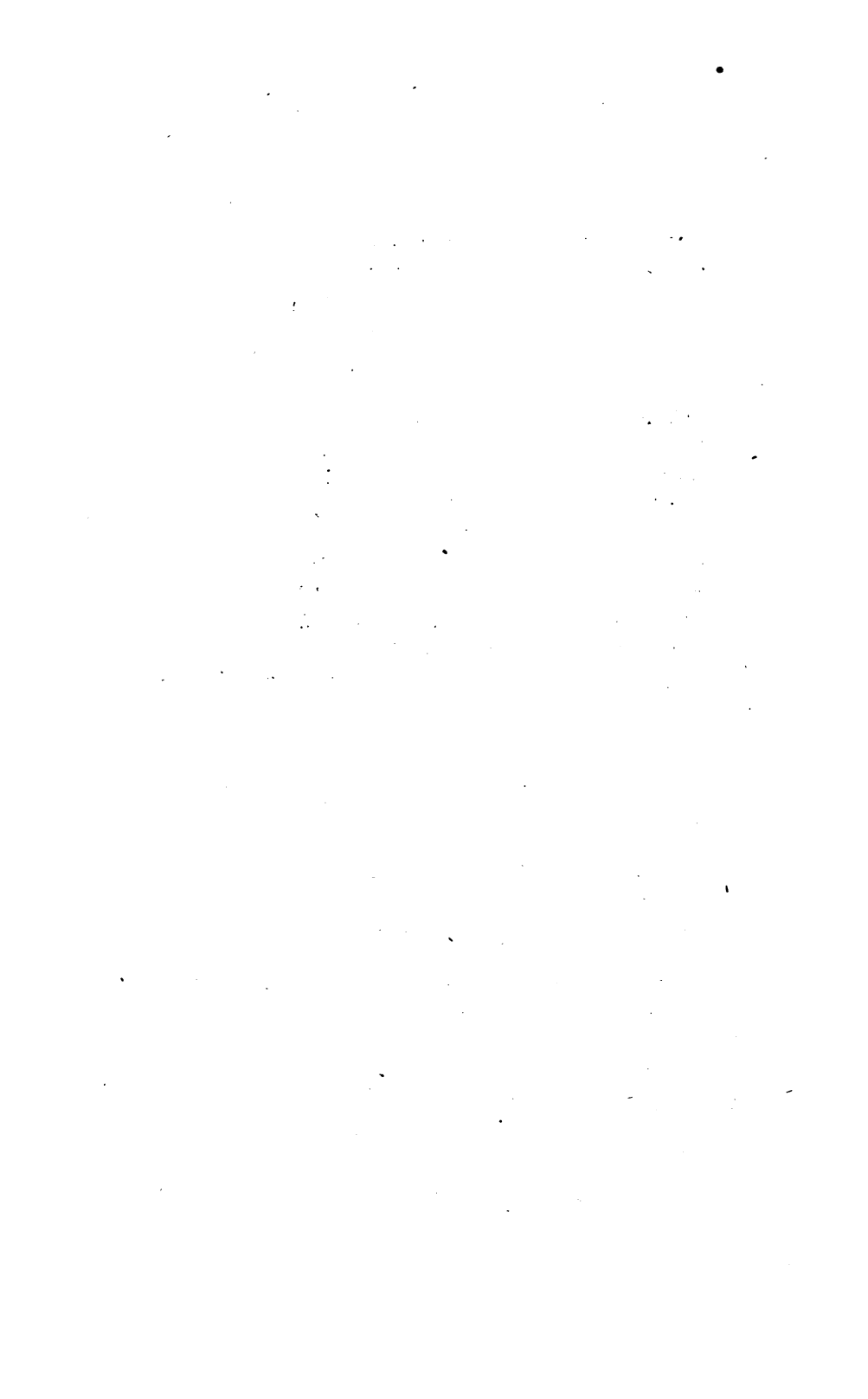
IN days remote, and surely unlike these,
When nought but feats of chivalry could please;
When every trusty 'squire, and dauntless knight,
Rush'd eager forth, accoutred for the fight;
Hermits and priests with princes dar'd combine
T' avenge the wrongs of hallow'd Palestine.
Then, *Cœur de Lion* left these favour'd coasts
To rescue Sion from the Arab hosts;
And his fair sister, as our records sing,
Pursued the fortunes of th' advent'rous king.—
The royal pilgrim left her native home
To seek the city of the Holy Tomb,
Where, by the arms of Saracens subdued,
The Christians groan'd in abject servitude.
Yet vainly does she hope to see them freed!—
To fears for them, fears for herself succeed.
The maid, a captive now, consign'd to grief,
Mourns in the palace of an Arab Chief.
(The same whose conqu'ring arm Lusignan own'd;
Judea's sceptred ruler, now dethron'd.)
Soon, by her tears, her youth, her beauty mov'd,
The mighty victor saw, and own'd he lov'd.

Strange as it seems, the Infidel possest
A heart with every virtue's stamp imprest ;
A martial spirit, an exalted mind,
By glory kindled, and by love refin'd ;
His various acts his various merits prove ;
And she, who sigh'd for freedom—sighs for love.

Damsels,— forbear our heroine to blame :
For who among you had not done the same ?

But now, Devotion's dictates interpose,
And doom the Cross and Crescent endless foes.
Duty, alone, the princely pair divides ;
For ah ! their diff'ring faith their mutual passion chides !
At length to Carmel's convent walls, the maid
Ev'n by her generous lover is convey'd.
There, while the lovely novice seeks the veil,
And Richard's warriors Ascalon assail,
To the enamour'd chief a tale is brought,
(Whereby to jealous rage his soul is wrought,)
That bold Lusignan had presum'd t' invade
The sacred dwelling of the heav'nly maid ;
Aiming by stealth, by marriage rites profane,
And impious force, her royal hand t' obtain.
The prince with eager speed the city leaves,
The convent reaches, and the fair retrieves ;
While subterranean paths the lovers' flight
Conceal,—and darkness of the favouring night.
Emerging now, on Cesarea's plain,
The Chief to martial duties hastes again.—
But, soft !—I must not *peach* !—What next befel,
The folks behind the curtain soon will tell.

Yet, ere I bid adieu, one little word
In our behalf, from me may sure be heard :
For though our humble writer holds no claim
By free translation to an author's name,
Yet, if this tribute your approval meet,
Each aim of her ambition is complete.
Alike our little acting troop, 'tis known,
Centre their hopes and fears in You alone.
No JORDAN bids you smile, no SIDDONS here
Appals the heart, or calls th' obedient tear ;
No magnet here the nightly audience draws,
Or claims the thund'ring peals of just applause.
A simple group alone, some short,—some tall,—
Appears to-night :—alarm'd, unpractis'd, *all*.
But you with kindness will our efforts hail ;
Be pleas'd where we succeed, and pardon where we fail.



MALEK ADHEL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Country near Cesarea, wild and rocky.

Enter KALED and HERMINIA, from a Cave.

Kaled. THUS far, through toilsome paths we've held
our way ;

And now, to Cesarea nigh at hand,
Here, lady, let us wait awhile, and rest;
Till mine illustrious chieftain shall rejoin us
With his fair Christian captive.

Her. Poor Matilda !

Why was she hurried from her convent walls
By your inhuman, sacrilegious hands ?

Kal. Call them not such. Our purpose was to save
her.

Think'st thou our Sultan's brother, Malek Adhel,
Lion of battles nam'd, for great exploits,
And Thunderbolt of war, who loves your Princess

Then, my Matilda, he,—that stranger youth
Who told me that Lusignan had profan'd
The sacred precincts of thy cloister walls,
To make thee his, by a forc'd union there,—
That youth was an impostor?

Mat. Oh! no more!

No doubt, a secret agent of Lusignan's,
Sent but t' inveigle thee from Cesarea.

M. Ad. Eternal Pow'rs! and can ye, then, permit
That perjur'd wretches, thus, should cloak themselves
In the bright robes of truth?—But no; 'tis not
The traitor's subtlety, 'tis mine own heart
Which has misled me here. Oh! I had been
With equal ease, dup'd by the grossest snare!—
When thou wast nam'd, Matilda, my fond eyes
Grew blind to aught but thee. Thy name,—a charm,
A magic talisman,—betray'd my senses,
O'ercame my prudence, and to Love alone
Allow'd the pow'r of action. Oh! my life!
A fear has cross'd me, freezing all my soul!
For thou mayst suffer from my fatal rashness.
Lusignan, proud ev'n of his treachery,
Will seek his vantage from it: Cesarea—
That city whose defence but late I swore
To Saladin, perhaps, ere this, is lost;
And I the cause—Oh Saladin! my brother!
How will my mad desertion seem to thee?—
Matilda,—princess,—now withdraw your love:
I am unworthy of it, since to gain it
I have betray'd my trust, betray'd my country!

Kal. Yield not thy soul, oh! noble Malek Adhel,
To black despair a prey! 'Tis true, that Kaled
When he perceiv'd, to combat it was vain,
Obey'd thy will, and left with thee yon city;
Though had he, sooner, known thy wild design,
Thou hadst alone left Cesarea's gates,
Trampling his lifeless corse. But now, behold,

[Pointing behind the scenes.]

Where yonder mist, arising from the vale,
Shews thy deserted post is still thine own!
Great Allah saves thee.—Yet, upon the walls
Float the proud standards of the Abassides—

M. Ad. (*Looking out.*) The Crescent too, beams still
its golden glories

From all our mosques and tow'rs; far to the North,
The banners of the Cross stream to the wind;
And peace reposes in the Christian camp.
Within the city too, all seems as hush'd
As if grim war had ne'er besieg'd its walls.

Kal. Yonder, my prince, behold the gate of Omar,
Where hold our sentries yet their 'custom'd watch,
Moslems proclaim'd by robes and turban'd heads.—
Thrice noble master, I behold thee safe,
And my heart leaps for joy! Our holy Prophet
Has, sure, watch'd o'er thee; and thy service past
Has pleaded for the pardon of thy rashness.

[Walks aside.]

M. Ad. Thou great and mighty Pow'r! who hast
preserv'd
This cherish'd object of my every care—

Whether the God by my Matilda worshipp'd,
Or the divinity my fathers own'd,—
Whate'er thy name, or Allah, or Jehovah,
Receive my thanks,—for thou hast sav'd Matilda!

[To MATILDA.]

Oh, my belov'd! behold the ills prepar'd
For me, by foemen's hands, will fall again
On the contrivers; and, when they shall know thee
Safe in my palace, while I 'scape the chains
They have prepar'd, they will be fully punish'd.

Mat. Blest be the secret, subterranean pass
Which has preserv'd my noble Adhel's life;
And sav'd *his* fame—though it endangers mine.

M. Ad. Still dost thou sigh, Matilda, for thy cell,
Regretting that thou art rejoin'd to me?
Wilt thou not grace, with all thy purest blessings,
The happy error which thus reunites us?

Mat. Oh! do not bid me be so criminal!
For, Adhel, I can now no more dissemble.
My coward heart rejoices to perceive
That my return is now impossible.
Th' attempt would risk thy life; and, at that price,
I ought not, sure, to wish it. Obstacles
Unnumber'd rise; and all increase my joy.—
Oh! Christian void of courage and of faith!
Thy heart, with love inflated, owns no wish
But for a perishable good, and looks
With terror on the path that leads to Heaven!

M. Ad. Joy of my life! I cannot fear the future:
I'm henceforth, happy;—for I am with thee!

[Taking her hand.]

Come; seek we now admittance to the city,
Where soft repose and sweet refreshment wait thee.
Lead on, good Kaled, towards the gate of Omar.

[*Eseunt.*]

SCENE II.

*The gate of Omar, at the entrance of the city of Cesarea,
guarded by men in the Saracen habit.*

Re-enter MALEK ADHEL, MATILDA, KALED, and
HERMINIA.

M. Ad. At length I welcome thee, my only love,
Before the gates of this my loyal city.
The Christians, dupes of their own perfidy,
Will mourn thy loss; Lusignan vainly hope
To rob me of thee more.

*Enter LUSIGNAN hastily, from the Gate, followed by
DEMAS and Guards.*

Lus. 'Tis false, by Heaven!
He robs thee of her now.

M. Ad. (Starting.) Lusignan here?

Lus. Ay, Saracen, Lusignan holds command
Within thy Cesarea now. Disarm [To the Guards.
Those infidels; quick, bind their hands in chains,
And lead them captives to the western tower.

[MALEK ADHEL and KALED disarmed, and
put in chains.

M. Ad. Infernal prodigy!—Am I awake,

Or comes some hideous dream athwart my fancy?
Where am I?—where?

Lus. Thou'rt in the Christians' power.
Behold, in me, thy conqueror and rival;
And yield thy sword, thy liberty, and love:
For know Matilda mine; thyself a prisoner,
Ev'n in these walls, where late thou held'st command.

Mat. Oh, treachery! Oh! horror past all utterance!
My Adhel, thou art lost!

M. Ad. And thou, Matilda!
Fate, now, can do no more to ruin us.

Lus. Struggle, thou proudest bulwark of the Crescent;
Lion of battles, struggle in my toils!
In vain;—for Cesarea bends before me;
And ev'n this royal maid, my future queen,
Shall own, ere long, Lusignan for her lord.

*[Exit, leading MATILDA, who looks back, in despair,
at MALEK ADHEL, and, arrived at the side scene,
faints, and is supported by HERMINIA and DEMAS.]*

Manent MALEK ADHEL, KALED, and Guards.

M. Ad. Oh! thou hast torn my bosom'd heart away!
Accurs'd, perfidious—no, I will not curse thee:
I have too many wrongs, so to avenge them.
A time may come, when—no; I'll curse alone
The blindness which has made me, thus, thy dupe.
Madman!—I've led the maid my soul adores,
With mine own hands, into my rival's power!
Let Cesarea in my absence fall;—
That Cesarea, Saladin so late

Entrusted to my charge ; which, to defend
To my last breath, so solemnly I swore !
These, these are horrors not to be surviv'd :
Ills that attack the very seat of life,
And bid pulsation cease. No more !—lead on !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*An apartment in the palace of MALEK ADHEL, in
Cesarea.*

MATILDA, *reclining on a sofa* ; HERMINIA, *standing
near her.*

Her. How fares your highness now ?

Mat. Alas, Herminia !

When I beheld the noble Adhel laden
With ignominious chains, that moment seem'd
To sum up all my miseries in one,
And bring them to one close ; but tell, ah ! tell me,
What fate attends th' unhappy prince ?

Her. Alas !

Within the dark cells of a narrow prison,
He pines away the hours ! Lusignan triumphs :
Forgetful that, to craft alone, he owes
This most inglorious conquest.

Mat. Base Lusignan,—
Jerusalem's dethron'd, unworthy sovereign,—
Lord of thy life, heroic Malek Adhel !
Thy Cesarea taken,—thy Matilda,
Through thine excess of love, for ever lost !—

Oh!—could I hide me from the light of day,
Which beams upon such sorrows!—Pow'rs of Heav'n!
Is, then, th' extent of mine offences made
The standard whence my chastisement is measur'd?

Enter LUSIGNAN hastily.

Lus. (To Herminia.) Lady, you may withdraw:—
I would be left
To speak, alone, with England's princess, here.

[Exit HERMINIA.]

Mat. (Rising with dignity, and coming forward.)
Lusignan lords it, then, in Cesarea.
In truth, when I beheld a hero's hands
With shackles charg'd, well might I rest assur'd
'Twas not my brother who commanded here.

Lus. Princess, the Christians to Lusignan owe
A signal victory: rejoices not
The pious sister of great *Cœur de Lion*,
When conquest sits upon the Christian helm?

Mat. I should indeed rejoice, if, to my soul,
The Christians' honour were not dearer, far,
Than their most splendid victories; if thou,
Lusignan, hadst not bought by treachery,
A sorry triumph o'er the Crescent's sons.

Lus. Madam, our foes could hold no other language.

Mat. Such language, were he here, would Richard
hold:

For perfidy his royal soul disdains.—
And know, his sister boasts an equal scorn
Of all duplicity. Would *Cœur de Lion*—

Say, would that generous monarch have endur'd
To see enchain'd by thee, those princely hands
Which sav'd him twice from death, in battle's hour?
The hands of Malek Adhel,—noblest hero
That e'er the world beheld?

Lus. (Impatiently.) Hold, madam, hold!
This is too much! Too well you know your power
Over my heart, since fearlessly, you thus
Extol a rival to my face,—whose life
Lies, now, within my grasp.

Mat. Thou speakest, sire,
As though the sole authority were thine.
Richard, our chief, I know at Ascalon;
But are the Christian princes, who engag'd
In this crusade, stripp'd then, of pow'r and rights?
If they have aided, hitherto, thy triumphs,
Claim they not, also, share in the disposal
Of the war's prisoners?

Lus. (Impetuously.) No!—I alone
The siege conducted, its success ensur'd.
No doubt, the princes of the Holy League,
To leave me sole disposer of a conquest
They owe to me, requir'd not that, departing,
Richard with all his own supremacy
Should have invested me.

Mat. (Looking fixedly at him.) 'Tis well, Lusignan;
Since, then, this enterprise is thine alone,
To Malek Adhel thou, alone, didst send
That slave, with foul impostures charg'd, and taught
By thee in base deception's arts, who led

The unsuspecting prince to take a step,
Of danger, as of boldness unexampled :—
Tearing me even from the altar's side !
And if the sanctity of mine asylum
By Saracens was forcibly invaded,
'Tis thou, alone, wert cause of their offence.

Lus. How, madam ! make you me responsible
For crimes of sacrilegious infidels ?

Mat. And who committed, if not thou, Lusignan,
This impious crime ?—Did not thy thoughts devise it ?
And tell me now, which is most culpable,
The Mussulman who blindly dealt the blow,
Or subtle Christian who directed it ?

Lus. (*Aside.*) By Heav'n ! she more esteems my
rival's chains,
Than the proud palms that deck my victor brow !
(*Aloud.*) Let us leave now, this idle controversy ;
For here, Matilda, by th' eternal Power
That reigns above, I swear, you must be mine.
I swear that, rather than resign this hand,
I would resign my life.

[*Taking her hand, which she withdraws again.*

In vain you seek
To fly :—you shall not leave me. Long, too long,
I've suffer'd your disdain without a murmur,
Although your royal brother propp'd my cause,
And Christendom united to approve it.
Then, since, by shewing rev'rence most profound,
As though you were my sovereign, I have fail'd ;
Perhaps I better may be profited

Commanding as your master. Henceforth, therefore,
I will employ, to force you to be mine,
My utmost scope of power.

Mat. (Indignantly.) When England's king
His pow'r consign'd to thee, he surely dream'd not
Thou wouldst employ it to oppress the weak.
Lusignan, oh!—amid the infidels
A captive long I've dwelt; yet never saw
That worshipper of Mahomet, whose soul
Would not, indignantly, have spurn'd the part
Judea's king has in my presence chosen,
Whereby to stain his character.

Lus. Matilda,
My projects by your scorn are but confirm'd;
And, by the Power we both revere, I swear,
If yonder sun set not upon our nuptials,
My rival dies.

Mat. Profane and barb'rous man!
Heav'n, dost thou lend thy name to oaths like these?

Lus. (Taking her hand.) Decide, Matilda; wilt thou
reign hereafter,
The holy city's queen, Lusignan's wife?

Mat. (Withdrawing her hand.) Never! since ev'n the
death of Malek Adhel,
To me, has less of dread than such a marriage.

Lus. (Coldly.) 'Tis well; then shall I doom the pagan's
death
More gladly, since his unconverted soul
Will be from thine eternally divided. [Going.]

Mat. (Aside.) Terrific thought ! that freezes every vein !

Oh ! what more fearful than the future doom
That waits the infidel's rejected soul,
If he resist the truth, and die in error !
(*Aloud.*) No, the enleagued princes ne'er will suffer
The perpetration of so black a crime :
All will revolt against this base injustice ;
All will combine, Lusignan, to oppose thee.
'Tis but appealing to my loyal English,
With Austrian Albert, and brave Burgundy—

Lus. (Interrupting.) Nor Austrian Albert, nor brave
Burgundy,
Nor ev'n your loyal English can preserve him :
I here command alone.

Mat. Commanding crimes,
Our Christians, justly, will refuse t' obey thee :
Nor will the high-born chiefs who grace our armies
Submit to see their holy cause so sullied.

Lus. Perhaps, like you, those high-born chiefs will
deem

Their honour bound to spare th' ensnared life
Of their most potent foe ; but I, with ease,
Can secretly destroy him ;—and, myself
Soar, ev'n beyond suspicion.

Mat. (Aside.) Oh !—he dies then !
(*Aloud.*) But grant that human justice shall absolve,
Is there no higher court whose power can awe thee ?
Are there, in Heav'n, no thunderbolts t' appal
The man who meditates so foul a crime ?

Lus. (Kneeling at her feet.) I merit, I expect my
punishment :

But oh ! remorse and fear are light, compar'd
With the superior dread of seeing thee
The wife of Malek Adhel,—of my rival !

Mat. (Disdainfully.) This impious frenzy would in-
spire more pity
Than ev'n aversion, were I not reduc'd
To that extreme of misery, which makes
Thy hated hand, or the eternal doom
Of a brave prince, my dire alternative.—
But ere I take my last resolve, Lusignan,
I must behold him.

Lus. (Rising imperiously.) No—believe me, madam,
You shall not see him : well I know your power.
Or e'er he would behold you mine, perhaps
He would consent to own the Gospel's light ;
That you might firmly look upon his death,
Perhaps would ev'n receive baptismal rites.
No, no ! refuse me still, that he may die
An obdurate heathen ; and deliver thus
My jealous soul from fear of your reunion,
Ev'n through eternity's unbounded reign.

Mat. (Throwing herself at his feet.) Inhuman prince!
If, for a matchless hero
Thou own'st no reverence ;—if thy bosom feels
No pity for Matilda's deep despair ;
Pity, at least, thyself !—Oh, think !—Destruction
Awaits thee in the path thou art pursuing !
Thou art about to see thy guilty hands

Crimson'd with innocent blood!—To stab a prince
Thou hast condemn'd in dungeon glooms to pine,
And robb'd of all protection, but—thine own!
Christian! recall to mind thy heav'nly Master!—
Such were not His instructions!

Lus. Heav'nly beauty!

Demand my blood, my life; nay, ask yet more!
For thy sake, every sacrifice is easy,
Except resigning thee. Then rise, Matilda—

Mat. (Still prostrate.) Never, till thou hast heard me!

Here I lie

Till Death himself release, if thou refuse me.
Hear now, Lusignan, how thou mayst retrieve
My lost esteem: nay, gain my admiration.
Though passion has awhile degraded thee,
One glorious effort may redeem the past.
Oh! let the hands which now I press in mine,
Break the harsh chains which fetter Malek Adhel's!
Beholding thee so great,—so generous,
He doubtless, more will fear, but *must* admire thee!
'Tis heroism that I require, I grant;
But well thou know'st its influence o'er my soul:
Let me not think, then, I o'errate thy worth,
When I believe thee capable t' attain it.

Lus. (Aside.) Now must I shift my ground; and, to
amuse her

With hope's delusive dreams, affect the hero.

(Aloud, raising her.) Rise, lovely princess! you have
conquer'd: rise,

And speak a generous pardon of that boldness

Which an excess of love alone inspir'd,
And best may justify. I promise all
That you have deign'd to ask ; and, further yet
To prove my zeal, I would still more perform.

Mat. (Aside.) Though he grants all, I am not
reassur'd ;
For somewhat in his favour seems more dreadful
Than his most fiery rage. How shall I answer ?

Enter DEMAS hastily.

Dem. The Christian princes, sire, are all assembled :
Soon as they heard of Malek Adhel's capture,
They left their tents, and now, within this palace,
Demand an audience.

Lus. Know'st thou what they purpose ?

Dem. They from your majesty would learn, what fate
Is destin'd for th' illustrious captive—

Lus. (Starting.) Hah !

Dem. Th' occasion asks some haste, my royal lord ;
For great commotion now prevails among them.

Lus. How ? sayst thou so ?—Then, Demas, quickly
bring me
My lance and buckler. I'll attend them.

[Exit DEMAS, and returns with the armour.]

Mat. Yet,
Remember, sire, your promises.

Lus. I will.
Be calm, and fear not, madam.

[Exit LUSIGNAN, followed by DEMAS.]

Mat. Oh ! great Heaven !

He makes me tremble, bidding me be calm !
What can I do ? Where look on earth for comfort ?
By man deceiv'd, abandon'd, and betray'd !
When Tyre's archbishop saw me torn away
From holy Carmel's altars, why, alas !
Did he not follow my bewilder'd steps ?
Oh ! charitable Anselm ! 'twere a task,
Well worthy thee, to clear my Adhel's doubts ;
Complete conversion's pious work, and bid
The blaze of truth illumine a hero's soul !
Depriv'd of him, of thee, of every aid,
My joyless soul can turn alone to Heaven. [Kneels.
But thou, Heav'n's Lord ! art merciful ! To thee
The wretched suppliant never kneels in vain !

[The scene closes.

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Prison.

MALEK ADHEL *seated on the ground, in a mournful posture. To him, enter the ARCHBISHOP.*

Arch. Darkness and horror reign within these cells;
And groans, and stifled sighs assail mine ear.

[*Seeing MALEK ADHEL.*

Heav'n! has *Thy* guiding hand convey'd him hither?
And hast thou charg'd Misfortune to reveal
Thy name all pow'rful to him?

M. Ad. (Suddenly rising.) Hah! what voice—
What well-known voice pervades these realms of woe?
Is 't Anselm that I hear?

Arch. (Embracing him.) 'Tis he! My son,
My son, Heav'n will deliver thee—

M. Ad. (Interrupting.) Ah no!—
My honour—Heav'n will not restore my honour!
Oh, Father! I have lost it!—I have felt
There was, for me, a greater grief on earth,
Than ev'n Matilda's loss.

Arch. Our great Creator
Can yet, my son, with vantage render back
All thou hast lost: for still our frail possessions
Are poor, compar'd with His celestial treasures.

M. Ad. No, no; there is no peace, no hope for me
Abandoning the town he trusted to me,

I have betray'd my brother ; been surpris'd—
Entrapp'd by traitor-hands ; and, loaded thus,
With chains, most slave-like,—dragg'd to this vile
 dungeon ;

And here, upon this straw, I wait for death.

Arch. Talk not of death, my son; thou shalt not die!
Behold the time when Anselm may redeem
His various debts of gratitude to thee.
I have the means to set thee free.

M. Ad. My father,—
What dost thou mean?

Arch. What I may well perform.

M. Ad. But oh! reflect; what were Lusignan's rage,
Should he thus lose his prey, his destin'd slave?

Arch. No matter; thou shalt hence.

M. Ad. Bethink thee yet,
If I go hence, 'twill be t' oppose the Christians ;
If I go hence, 'twill be t' avenge my brother,
And to restore to him his Cesarea.—

Arch. (Impatiently.) Why tell me this, young man ?
I had not ask'd thee !

M. Ad. Nay, rather than deceive thee, I would die
Amid these dreary vaults. And tell me, now,
Since he thou wouldst preserve, *must* fight against thee,
Still wouldst thou have me free?

Arch. All-gracious Heaven !
Did he not break my bonds at Damietta ?
At Jaffa and Damascus, save my life ?
Has he not, ever, sent me to rejoin
Our Christians, though I urg'd them on to war

Against his faith and nation ? Wouldst thou see
Thine enemies more generous than thy sons ?—
No ; by this act of charity, I hurt not
Thy sacred cause : for I have ever known
More hearts by love converted, than by wrath.

[To M. Ad.

'Tis He, Prince Adhel, that indulgent master,
All tenderness and mercy, bids me save thee.

[Taking off his chains.

It is not I, 'tis He delivers thee,
Who reigns above, the Saviour of the world !
Oh ! may this thought arrest thy conqu'ring sword
In battle's heat, and bid thee spare the Christians !

[Takes the hand of M. Ad.

Come now, my son ; I know each winding way
'Mid these abodes of sorrow. Oft 't has been,
In times long past, the kind decree of Heav'n,
That I should visit them, thereby to learn
The happy means of saving Malek Adhel.

M. Ad. Anselm, a pow'r unknown disturbs my
heart :

All that I hear from thee, and feel within,
Wakes to new thoughts. Thy words seem truth itself ;
But ere I will believe—will listen to them,—
I must efface the insults I have suffer'd ;
Must meet in arms Lusignan—

Arch. (With solemnity.) Be a Christian :
Learn to subdue thy pride, and hate revenge.

M. Ad. (Kneeling to Arch.) Pity me, Father ! for I
dare not listen !

Somewhat there is in thee, awakes my wonder ;
 Nay, bids me waver, even on my duties :—
 Somewhat, which speaks more loudly, ev'n than
 honour !

Stay me no longer. I may soon recal thee ;
 May need thy kind compassion. Life is odious—
 I am from my Matilda torn for ever !
 Ah ! daring then no longer live for her,
 It will be sweet to me, by thee to die !

Arch. (Laying his hands on MALEK ADHEL's head.)
 I bless thee, oh my son ! and may our God
 Bless thee, as I do ! May he new create
 Thy mind, and arm thee with his Holy Spirit.
 May thy past errors henceforth be forgotten ;
 Thy heart subdued. Soon mayst thou learn t' acknow-
 ledge

His hand, who founded earth and measur'd heaven.
 May thy salvation dawn, and Heav'n's high justice
 Soon be reveal'd to thee ! *[A long pause.]*
(Discovering a secret door.) Mark now, this outlet
 Leads secretly beyond the city walls. *[M. Ad. rises.]*
 Plung'd in the neighbouring wood of sycamores,
 Await the darkness of the night, and cross
 The plain tow'rds Ascalon. Elude thy foes ;
 But ever, still, the eye of Providence
 Shall be upon thee,—never shall forget thee !

M. Ad. Oh, holy patriarch ! Do we part even here ?
 Remain'st thou then imprison'd ? Wouldst thou take
 My chains ? Ah ! will the Christians dare revenge
 My flight upon thy venerated head ?

Arch. No, fear it not, my son. Thy victor sword

Made it their prudence to detain thee captive ;
 But prudence, to the noble sons of Christ,
 Is far less dear than generosity.
 Believe not all our Christians like Lusignan ;
 There is not one but will rejoice, prince Adhel,
 To know thee safe : not one, but will with thanks
 Repay my having dar'd to give thee freedom !

M. Ad. If they are such as thou describ'st, my father,
 How great, how noble are the sons of Christ !
 But how surpassing great, that Power Divine,
 Who form'd such souls as thine, and my Matilda's !
 Matilda !—Oh ! that name is steep'd in sorrow !
 My father, I shall never see her more !

Arch. (Severely.) Rash youth ! thou wouldst have
 torn her from her Maker !
 Thou hast presum'd thine arm had pow'r to wrestle
 Against Omnipotence !—Lo ! now, how Heaven
 Can mock th' audacious thought ! The youthful princess
 Must yet come back to Heav'n ; and thou, prince Adhel,
 Must think of her no more.

M. Ad. 'Twill soon be thus :
 Soon may she quit the world, and Malek Adhel
 No more be here to mourn for her.—My father,
 Tell her, that I restore her recent promise ;
 And pray her to devote her thoughts to Heaven.
 Oh ! she will comprehend this supplication ;
 For she will feel it is my last adieu !

[*After a pause, embracing the Archbishop.*
 Adieu, too, thou—deliverer, friend,—and father !
 Should Adhel die ere he again behold thee,

Promise him, now, to mourn o'er his cold ashes,
And call down blessings from thy God upon him!
[*They embrace again, and exit M. Ad. hastily.*]

Manet ARCHBISHOP.

Arch. Eternal Lord! ev'n in the noon-day beam
O'ershade and hide, him whom the sword pursues;
And guide in secrecy the wanderer's path!
Illustrious Adhel, now I take thy place: [*Sits down.*
Perhaps, too, take thy chains—thy heavy chains!
Poor prince! and is it thus they have o'ercharg'd thee?
Pardon, oh Lord! those who oppress their foes!

Enter LUSIGNAN.

Lus. Hah! what means this? My pris'ner gone; and
Anselm,

The Tyrian primate, in his place?—Confusion!

Arch. Whom seeks the Holy City's king, within
These gloomy walls? Comes he to free from chains
The captive sufferer?

Lus. Anselm, no—I seek
The Saracen's blood alone, whose impious sword
Laid waste that holy city, and despoil'd
Lusignan of his crown.

Arch. He's here no longer.
My son, I've taken on this head his sin,
And charg'd myself with his iniquity.
Look now—if blood be thy demand for this,
I freely give thee mine.

Lus. Who broke his bonds?
Who dar'd to set him free?

Arch. (Rising.) HE set him free,
 Who sent me forth to heal misfortune's wounds ;
 To publish freedom to the wretched slave,
 And to the captive, blest deliverance !—
 Oh, Christian king ! what path hast thou essay'd
 To bring thee back to Sion, and thy throne !
 An artifice, of royalty the stain,
 Drew to thy wily net this foe illustrious ;
 A treachery to the Christian name injurious,
 Brings thee to visit thy defenceless victim ;
 To bid him die, perhaps—

Lus. (Aside.) Oh ! would I could !
 But now, what fate hath lost, must art redeem.
(Aloud.) Heav'n speaks by holy Anselm's mouth ; and I
 Must own, that I have merited its wrath ;
 Must own, a fatal passion has misled me :
 But can I ne'er efface these ills, my father ?—
 I can ; and let me now explain the means.
 Though Kaled I already have set free,
 At fair Matilda's suit, the confidence
 Of the crusading princes, who resent
 My treatment of Prince Adhel, will be lost,
 Unless they deem that, by my private order,
 Thou hast enfranchis'd him. This, holy primate,
 Allow me, unoppos'd, to say ; and then
 May Christendom hope conquest, glory, gain,—
 Every advantage that our cause requires,
 From my unvanquish'd arm,—undaunted spirit.

Arch. Thy loss of fair Jerusalem, thy kingdom,
 Too well I see, is not enough, Lusignan,

T' abate the swellings of thy boastful heart ;
Arrest its vain impetuosities ;
And teach thee modest, sage humility.
The least success, howe'er ignobly won,
Exalts thy pride, and bids it aim at all
That human heart can hope, or hand achieve.
Yet will I not unveil thy shame, Lusignan ;
'Twere too opprobrious to our holy cause :
But all thy future steps I will pursue
With a fix'd, watchful eye ; though I respect
Thy purple royalty, thy high descent ;
Know, that 'tis mine t'annihilate thy greatness,
If thou employ it to unworthy ends :
Know, I can plead with Heav'n the sinner's cause,
But cannot be the advocate of sin ;
And lastly know, that, stripp'd of all disguise
From outward pow'r or innate artifice,
I to the wide surrounding world will shew
The man who dares persist in evil deeds ! [Exit.
Lus. Accurs'd mischance !

Enter DEMAS.

What brings thee, Demas, hither ?

Dem. I bring you, sire, important news : ev'n now,
Encamp'd on the surrounding plain, the sultan,
With all his forces, threatens Cesarea.
Kaled already joins him.

Lus. Malek Adhel,—
Whom yon officious priest has freed from prison,—
Is, doubtless, on his way to aid his brother ;

And, Demas, we must meet, and give them battle,
 Ere they invest the city. (*Aside.*) Curs'd mischance!
 That spoils me of my most secure revenge!
 But yet, 'tis something still, that we may meet.
 This formidable Saracen, this chief
 Victorious ever in the bloody fight,
 Rival in arms, not less than in my love,
 May fall—and by this hand. Oh! be it so!
 The thought alone so soothes my angry soul,
 I reckon not how reality's achiev'd!

(*Aloud.*) Demas, thou wast thyself a Mussulman,
 Though now some years have seen thee in my train?

Dem. 'Tis true, my liege, and much my state is
 better'd,

By leaving for a king's—a prophet's service.
 So am I now a Christian like yourself,
 And prompt to execute your every wish.

Lus. Good Demas, what if I demand a service
 Whose true performance shall enrich thee ever?—
 As earnest of reward, this purse receive;

[*Gives a purse.*]

And tell me, wilt thou serve me?

Dem. While I live.

Let me but know your majesty's good pleasure.

Lus. What if the deed I ask be criminal?—
 Thou wouldst not hesitate?

Dem. (*Looking on the purse.*) No, by this gold!
 Nought should deter me, sire, from serving you.

Lus. Know, Demas, then, that in th' expected battle,
 I own but one desire, see but one object:

It is to conquer, by whatever means,
The Arab chief, my rival,—Malek Adhel.
By all those names so rooted in my hate,
That his survival would embitter mine.
Let him not live to boast of my defeat !
Death he may give, but let him death receive.
Be thou, my squire, still near us. If we move
Forth from the general shock of combatants,
Follow our steps in secret.—Victory mine,—
In peace shalt thou a rich reward enjoy ;
But if I fall,—I here repeat it, Demas,—
On thy fidelity I would depend
That he shall not survive me.

Dem. Sire, rely
On mine obedience.

Lus. I am satisfied.
The chance of war I, now, no longer dread ;
Since there is nothing left but death to fear.
Send we to Ascalon, and warn them there,
That Saladin besieges Cesarea.—
Richard, no doubt, will on the news return,
And reassume the sovereign command ;
While I shall, freely, quench my private hate,
Ev'n in the heart's-blood of this unbeliever.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Changes to SALADIN's camp near Cesarea.

Enter SALADIN attended.

Sal. (To his guards.) If he asks audience, bid him
seek it here;
And send me Kaled hither, instantly. [*Exeunt guards.*
(*After a pause.*) This is most strange! After such base
defection,
Thus does he dare, alone, unarm'd, to come,
A ready victim to my just resentment?—

Enter MALEK ADHEL.

Sal. (Severely.) Oh, Malek Adhel! when to thee I
trusted
The guard of Cesarea, 'twas not thus
Despoil'd, dishonour'd, humbled, and abash'd,
I thought again to see thee!
M. Ad. Saladin,
I am too culpable to meet thine eyes;
And Ayoub's * glorious name, in me disgrac'd,
Forbids me, now, to claim a brother's title.
My duty, oaths—all, all I have forgotten!
Lusignan holds command in Cesarea,
Master of walls, which to my care, thou gav'st!
Lusignan—Oh! I have no words t' express
The anguish of this moment—

* The name of the father of Saladin and Malek Adhel.

Sal. (Softened.) Yet relate
What strange event hath plac'd him in thy seat ?
Thou hast been still invincible, till now.

M. A. Would I had died, or e'er I ceas'd to be so !
But treachery, that stain on warrior's deeds,
Alone enabled him to seize the city.
Dupe of my fatal love, of my heart's weakness,
I ventur'd forth to rescue England's princess,—
As I imagin'd,—from Lusignan's power.
My rival knew the flight himself had plann'd,
And quickly seiz'd th' advantage of my absence
To make the city his : while, to entrap me,
Returning with my prize, his sentinels
Assum'd the Arab garb. I seek not, sultan,
T' avert thy wrath, or justify my folly.
The keen remorse I feel, permits me not
To seek or find excuse.

Sal. The faithful Kaled,
A witness of thy conduct, and a victim
Of thine imprudence, had already brought
To mine astonish'd ear, this strange recital ;
Yet did he paint thee far less culpable.
Kaled, thy friend, while he deplor'd thine errors,
Deem'd them not wholly inexcusable.

M. Ad. Is Kaled here ? Oh ! lives he ? Is he free ?

Enter KALED.

Kal. Prince, thou behold'st him.

M. Ad. Oh ! my valued friend ! *[Embracing.]*
Blest be the angel who deliver'd thee !

This opes, again, to joy, a heart I thought
For ever clos'd to happiness !

Kal. Prince Adhel,

Much have the prophet's sons and I endur'd ;
But it were yet ungrateful to deny
That, save Lusignan, every Christian chief
Hath prov'd himself humane and generous.
For me, although the hand was hid in darkness
That broke my chains, I yet have cause to know
That England's princess gain'd me liberty.

M. Ad. (*Aside.*) Ah yes ! the pitying act was thine,
Matilda !

But gratitude, like love, must now be hush'd.

Sal. (*To M. Ad.*) What now are thy resolves, and
to thy country

What reparation dost thou offer ?

M. Ad. Hear me.

When I beheld these limbs with fetters charg'd,
And fair Matilda in Lusignan's power ;
Proud Cesarea humbled, lost, enslav'd ;—
My glory tarnish'd,—thee betray'd, my brother !—
Death, instant death, had been my only prayer,
Had not the dear hope of avenging thee
Left me a sacred duty to fulfil.

Sal. The hero then, o'er a weak love triumphant,
Again, will mount the heights whence late he fell ;
And lead, again, my armies on to conquest ?

M. Ad. It may not be.—Oh ! mighty Saladin !
O'erwhelm me not with so much clemency !
So dear thy interests to Malek Adhel,

He cannot see thee to thyself unjust ;
And in this hour of humbled pride, he feels
Thy goodness far more painful than thy rigour.
Ah ! let me then, ev'n in the lowest ranks,
Amid the meanest of thy soldiers, hide !
Too happy, if they will permit me this :
They, whose fidelity, whose honour, still
Have been untainted, even by suspicion.

Sal. From earliest youth our constant friend, thou,
Kaled,

Know'st well the heart, dost not defend the errors
Of Malek Adhel ; and thy words shall guide me.
If thou unfit shalt judge him, or unworthy
His former state of high command to hold,
Thy sultan swears, by mighty Allah's throne,—
Regardless of the ties of blood,—to hush
The softer pleadings of fraternal love,
And listen, solely, to the voice of justice.
Speak, Kaled, and pronounce his final doom.

Kal. Great sultan, hear from me, the general wish :
Live Malek Adhel still, the glorious brother
Of our brave sovereign : may bright victory
Still gild his steps, and friendship's fondest ties
To Saladin unite him. Still, the object
Of our affection, may he be our leader !
Such would we have him, ever.

Sal. Such he shall be.—

Come ; in this fond embrace, the past is buried ;
And thou'rt my brother still. [To M. Ad.

M. Ad. Thy slave for ever ! [Embrace.
To all thy will devoted.—Saladin

And Kaled, oh ! 'tis sweet to be thus cherish'd :
 I feel it, though these touching proofs of love
 Tear me, for ever, from the gentle maid,
 But late the object of my fondest hopes.
 Ah, fatal hopes ! by every duty cross'd,
 And, now, to every duty sacrific'd ;—
 Farewell !—Eternally farewell, Matilda !

Sal. (*Giving him a sword.*) Banish her now thy
 thoughts ; and let this weapon
 Plant glory there, where love too long has reign'd.

M. Ad. My noble brother, and thou, trusting friend,
 Who, at the moment when I have betray'd you,
 Can still place faith in me—your confidence
 I thankfully accept ; for now, I feel
 I'm worthy of it. Oh ! the sacrifice
 My heart has vow'd to you, assures me so ;
 And soon this sword shall prove it.

Sal. Let us haste, then,
 And join to form our plan of battle : sure,
 That in th' intoxication of their triumph,
 The Christians will not hesitate to meet us.

M. Ad. That battle will be terrible—decisive !
 Yet a few days, perchance, and War's loud tongue
 Shall to the world proclaim, which empire falls.
 Whether, beneath the Prophet's mighty standard,
 Or the far-streaming banners of the Cross,
 The subjugated East shall henceforth bend !

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The plains of Cesarea, as in Act I.

MALEK ADHEL and KALED.

M. Ad. Behold the moment when our eager warriors,
Led to the fight by valiant Saladin,
Rush forth, and hasten to the grand assault.
Their lances now in rest, their vizors down,
The Christians too, forsake the guardian walls
Of Cesarea, rous'd with equal ardour.
Each spurs his courser's sides, and onward hastes
To meet th' opposed foe. Ere these shall part,
Sword shall cross sword; shield against shield shall
strike;
And jav'lin against jav'lin shall rebound.
Now must this arm to Saladin redeem
The city I have lost him. At the price,
(To me, the precious price,) of Christian blood,
Must his revenge be bought.—It must, it shall,—
Though, as Matilda's brother, every Christian
Is dear to Malek Adhel,—save Lusignan!

Kal. (Looking out.) Yonder, my prince, behold they
meet so closely,

That the crusading, from the Arab troops,
The eye can scarce distinguish.

M. Ad. Let's away ;
For Saladin will soon demand our aid :
And oh, Matilda ! could it lead to thee,
How gladly should I fly to victory ! [Exit.

Manet KALED.

Kal. (*Looking out.*) Now clouds of dust, thick rising
from the throng,
Conceal the combatants from view, obscure
The air, and mount to heav'n. 'Th' affrighted hills
Reverberate the clash of meeting arms,
The shouts of victory, and groans of death.
Heav'n be thy shield, brave prince ! for much I fear
Thou art, thyself, too heedless of defence. [Exit.
[Drums behind the scenes, heard at intervals.

Enter LUSIGNAN and DEMAS.

Lus. Richard, already, o'er their left wing triumphs ;
And I have broke their central lines. Our Christians
Have, thus, th' advantage, though the infidels
Headed by Saladin, have yet repuls'd us
With their right wing ; but since this Saracen,
This Malek Adhel, has attack'd our rear,
The victory seems about t' abandon us.
Could I withdraw my formidable rival
To single combat, in this spot remote,
Our troops would speedily redeem their loss ;
And I, though sure to perish in the struggle,—

Since sure the Arab chief will perish also,—
 Should hail ev'n death as welcome. Tarry, Demas,
 Within yon cave : I'll seek him through the field ;
 Provoking to the fight with bitterest taunts,
 Until (his prudence to his anger yielding,)
 He grasp at vengeance, and *my* vengeance meet !

[*Exit.*

Manet DEMAS.

Dem. (Looking out.) The battle rages still. The
 Mussulmans

Retain th' advantage, and the Christians fall.
 Yonder, Prince Adhel leads his pow'rs triumphant,
 With Kaled by his side,—a bulwark vain ;—
 For he is, surely, wounded, and Lusignan
 Shall buy an easy conquest. Now, my master,
 Reach, challenge, goad him too, with terms of scorn ;
 And probe him to the quick. His fury rous'd,
 Affect to fly, and lead him to his fate.—
 They come, they come ! I must to my retreat.

[*Retires among trees to the cave.*

Enter LUSIGNAN hastily, followed by MALEK ADHEL
wounded, both with swords drawn.

M. Ad. Have I at length attain'd thee, recreant king ?
 When thou by wrongs and insults hast provok'd,
 Wouldst thou by flight avoid, my just revenge ?

Lus. I meet thee, Saracen, I scorn thy power ;
 And joy to see, that vengeance to thy soul
 Is dearer than the cause of Saladin,
 Which now thou art deserting.

M. Ad. Thy destruction
Will best assist the cause of Saladin.
One instant may suffice to rid the earth
Of thee, detested rival! and 'twere vain,
To deem one instant of their leader's absence
Would bring to my brave troops defeat. Then haste—
Haste we t' extinguish in our blood, the hatred
Which mutually inflames us.

Lus. (Smiling scornfully.) Thou art wounded.
Our Christian steel, I see, has drunk thy blood,
And thou hast ceas'd to be invincible.

M. Ad. Your Christians have small cause of triumph
there ;
For life is worthless, now, to Malek Adhel,
And his warm life-blood may they freely take :—
But were they shed t' avenge thee, my Matilda—
And were it not, that thou would'st mourn my death,
How should I bless these parting vital drops !

Lus. Matilda mourn thy death ? No, pagan ; trust me,
She would partake the joy of Christendom.

M. Ad. Believe, Lusignan, thou'rt the only Christian
Whose blood, without reluctance, I could shed.

Lus. Yet thou, with all thy pride of warlike fame,
Shalt shortly bow thy crested head, subdued
By my superior force.

M. Ad. (Throwing away his shield.) Thy God for-
bid it !

Oh ! throw we by, these vain defences, yet,
Which but retard defeat ; and, rather, hasten

The happy hour when one of us shall cease
To hate the other.

Lus. (Throwing away his shield.) There, then, lies
my buckler.

Horrible Death! now hear our wrathful strokes!
Fly—hover round, and smile to see the victim,—
The glorious victim, which this day shall fall
Beneath thy dreaded sway! *[Exeunt fighting.]*

DEMAS coming forward, looks after them.

Dem. Lusignan never
Shew'd valour so resistless; never yet
Did hopes so bright invigorate his arm:
For Malek Adhel, weaken'd by his wounds,
Fails in that active strength, which yet, in him,
Courage may well supply. In either hand
He grasps his sword; now on Lusignan's head
Levels a furious blow—Lusignan staggers—
His helmet falls in shivers to the earth,
While show'rs of blood o'erwhelm his blinded eyes.
As if he scorn'd unequal fight, Prince Adhel
Throws his own casque far wide.—Lusignan now,
Scarce yet himself, springs quick upon the foe,
Ere he have time t' evade the heavy stroke:
Yet, though his blood wide gushes from his wound,
The Arab pierces quick his rival's side,—
Now, less t' attack, than to defend himself,
Lusignan seems to aim :—avoids the prince—
Wheels round him, wearies him, exhausts his strength;

Lo ! Malek Adhel, seizing, now, his poniard,
Makes at my master's heart,—they struggle now—
Entwin'd, attack each other, and repulse.
Adhel has seiz'd his royal adversary ;
He strikes with force—they fall,—they fall together !

[A noise, as of falling, behind.

Lus. (*Without.*) Hear me, Prince Adhel !—Oh !

Dem. Lusignan dies ! [Draws his dagger.

Then, come thou forth, my trusty weapon ! now,
Thy time is ripe for action. [Runs off.

Re-enter DEMAS hastily, followed by MALEK ADHEL,
in a wounded and bleeding state ; his helmet off, and
his dagger drawn.

M. Ad. Lurking traitor,
Where art thou ?—I have strength yet left to punish—
Ah, no ! I sink—mine eyes refuse to guide me.—
Oh ! if thou hast, within thy heart, one nerve
That yields to pity's touch, tell my Matilda— [Falls.

Dem. (*Looking out.*) By Heav'n, she comes ! and
with her the Archbishop.

How shall I meet their questions ? Wretched man !
Why canst not thou redeem thy crime, and bring
This prince, again, to life ?—Ah ! 'tis too late !
No pow'r can save him now !

Enter MATILDA and the ARCHBISHOP.

Mat. Believe me, father,
I from the palace turrets watch'd their steps ;

And saw them quit th' embattled field together.
They bent this way their course.—Oh! Pow'rs Supreme!—

What horror strikes mine eyes?—'Tis Malek Adhel!

Arch. Horror indeed! Here lies the prince we seek,
Cover'd with wounds, extended on the dust,—
But who hath done this deed?

Mat. (To DEMAS.) The deed was thine,
Assassin base! Thy bloody dagger speaks it!

Arch. Miscreant! Hope no forgiveness for thy crime,
But by sincere repentance, and confession.—
Fell Malek Adhel by thy hand?

Dem. Too truly.

Lusignan's the command, but mine the act.
Yet tremblingly my rash hand dealt the blow;
And still, perhaps, he lives.—Oh! let me hence—
I cannot bear to look at him again! [Exit.

Mat. (Putting her hand to the heart of MALEK ADHEL.)
My Adhel! let there beat one pulse of life
Within thy noble heart,—however faintly,—
And thy Matilda shall discover it!
If thou'rt no more;—if virtues great as thine
Must be hereafter punish'd, where, high Heav'n!
Would be thy justice, where thy truth?

Arch. My daughter,
Die, rather, of thy grief, than question, thus,
The Great Creator's will.

[MATILDA kneeling, places the head of MALEK
ADHEL on her lap.

Mat. (After a pause.) He breathes, my father!

Heav'n will not, surely, to thy pray'rs, refuse
Acceptance to the hero's soul.

Assur'd of Heav'n's forgiveness, die in peace.

Still dost thou not abandon, then, thy child?

Mat. (Passionately clasping her hands.) I bless thee,
gracious Lord! my Adhel lives!

M. Ad. (Endeavouring to raise himself.) Oh yet,
what voice is that? What heav'nly voice
Comes, to impart delight to death itself?

Arch. Give, oh my son! to other thoughts, these
moments,
These few, short moments of departing life;
For they may give thee life and bliss eternal.

M. Ad. (Taking MATILDA's hand.) With her, my
father?

Arch. Yes, my son, with her.
Surely, a Power all mercy, truth, and love,
Will grant acceptance to conversion, wrought
By love sincere and pure. With her, my son,
If thy last thoughts, last wishes rise to Him,
Who breath'd in death compassion on the sinner,
Thou shalt live ever happy, in a world,
Where sickness, crime, and sorrow are unknown.

M. Ad. Oh! smooth with heav'nly hope the paths
of death;
And make me worthy happiness like this!

Arch. (Giving him the Crucifix from his girdle.) Take
then, the holy symbol of Redemption:
Adore the beams of that bright Sun, which set
In blood, upon the Cross, to give thee light;
And hope, more fervently, thy soul's salvation,
From knowing that our Saviour's pow'r t' obtain,
Far, far exceeds all pow'r thine errors have
To rob thee of Heav'n's favour. Take, and live.

M. Ad. (*Taking the Crucifix with both hands, and pressing it to his lips.*) Rays of celestial light! I have beheld you—

Eternal life descending in my soul,—
And ne'er can lose you more! Faith, hope, and love,
To you I give my heart.—Receive, Matilda,
My last farewell.—My love!—I go before thee;
But to expect thee in those realms of bliss
Which Anselm promises.—Cease, then, to weep!—

Mat. Oh! these are tears which should with smiles
be mingled;

For now, we are assur'd to meet hereafter.

With blest eternity before our eyes,

Death seems but absence of a few short days.

(*Wildly*) My friend, my love—my Adhel,—I consent!

Be happy first!—I too sincerely love thee,
To wish thee longer on this sorrowing earth,
Or murmur at thy freedom!

Arch. (*Joining their hands.*) Christians, thus,
Religion, which once parted, now permits me
For ever to unite you. Malek Adhel,
Go, and receive thy baptism's high reward:
Mount to yon blest abodes, and there prepare
The bliss of this thy wife, whose tears below
Will expiate thine errors.

M. Ad. Oh! my father!
When I am gone, thou wilt protect Matilda;
And I would thank thee for thy pious cares—
But time permits not—for my fainting strength

Deserts me.—Father!—may Matilda's God
And thine, accept my soul! Farewell, dear love!
Farewell,—but for a season, and thine Adhel
Is thine, for ever!

[Dies.

[A long pause, during which MATILDA and the
ARCHBISHOP contemplate, sorrowfully, the corpse
of MALEK ADHEL.

Arch. Peace, for ever peace,
Departed hero, to thy noble soul!
Kind Heaven! sanctify this virgin's grief!
Let her rejoice at all thy bounty gives,
Without regretting what thou tak'st away.
Oh! daughter of affliction! raise thy head:
Droop not beneath a weight of earthly sorrow.
Daughter of Christ, thy mourning brings to Heav'n,
Atonement of thy husband's sins: Thy tears
Complete, perhaps, his punishment below.
Complain not, then, of sufferings or tears:
For him wilt thou not suffer willingly?

Mat. I will—I do! I am resign'd to all!

Arch. (After a pause.) Oh! leave this little earth,
and raise thine eyes

To yon unbounded space. See there, thy husband!

[Pointing upwards.

Mat. True, oh my father! yet, he's also—here!
See this cold, livid corse mine arms encircle—
It once was Malek Adhel; and the heart
Which beat for me so lately, beats no more!—

Arch. Daughter, these mortal relics, to the earth
Which claims them, now, must be restor'd.

Mat. Ah no !

I never will restore them. Oh, dear husband !
 I swear I will not quit thee.—When thou liv’dst,
 Ah ! was I not enough divided from thee ?
 What fear they now ?—Am I still envied, then,
 The mournful pleasure of beholding thee,—
 Thine eyes in darkness clos’d ; thy pale, cold lips ?
 This, the sole blessing which remains to me—
 Why would their cruelty deprive me of it ?

Arch. My child, one short hour past, didst thou
 not cry,—

“ Let him be sav’d, and I’ll forbear complaint ?”
 Behold, he now *is* sav’d, yet dost thou murmur.

Mat. I murmur not. I weep, but I rejoice ;
 Bless, and adore the great Creator’s mercies :
 But never will I part from Malek Adhel.
 These hands, alone, shall, o’er thy pallid face,
 The veil funereal spread, my lost, lost love !

[*Sinks down, her head falling on the bosom of*
 MALEK ADHEL.

Arch. (*Turning away, and contemplating the body*
at some distance.) How art thou fallen, glorious
 luminary,

Son of the morning ! Thou’rt cut down to earth,
 Who didst affright—didst scatter wide the nations !
 Ah ! to deplore the wounded unto death,
 Might my dim eyes become a source of tears
 That ceas’d nor night nor day !—What step is this ?

[*Returns to MATILDA.*

Enter KALED.

Kal. The Christians masters of the day;—our
sultan

Defeated, and withdrawing from the field;—
What arm could now redeem our heavy loss,
Save thine, oh Malek Adhel! Yet, 'tis rumour'd
That thou art fall'n. What dost thou, Christian,
there? *[To the ARCHBISHOP.*

Hast thou depriv'd of life the Crescent's champion?

Arch. *(Calmly resuming the Crucifix.)* Rather, I
deem that I have giv'n him life.

Mat. *(Rising, and placing herself between KALED
and the corpse.)* Whoe'er thou art, approach not!

—Come not near—

Seek not to tear him from me!

Kal. Royal maid!

Is't thou? My master, then, is surely here.

Mat. *(Fearfully and wildly.)* Kaled, I will not give
him up to thee!

Thou wast his friend, I know it; but no matter—
I'll never give him up to thee!

Kal. *(Perceiving the corpse, casts himself on the
ground beside it, and strikes his head.)* My prince!

My master—oh! my master! Is it thus,
I'm doom'd again to see thee?

Mat. Kaled, know,

Thy master died my husband, and I'll die.

Ev'n by my husband's side.

Kal. (Rising, and pointing behind the scenes.) At
risk of life,

With yonder troop of horse I came, to seek
If living, Malek Adhel ; or if dead,
To Saladin, the precious, sad remains
Of what was once his brother, to restore.
Of right, they to our sultan must belong.—

Mat. No! they belong to me alone!—And, Kaled,
If thou dost tear from me my husband, know,
That I will follow to th' extremest verge
Of the wide earth,—on foot I'll follow thee,
And claim again, with screams, my husband's corse!
*[Sinks down, and presses the hand of MALEK ADHEL
to her heart.]*

Kal. To the departed soul of Malek Adhel,
Princess, I know that thou wert justly dear.
Nor can I better honour his lov'd memory,
Than by a prompt obedience to thy wishes:—
But we to Saladin have sworn to bring
His brother's body ; and we must obey him.
Yet come thou with us ; come, illustrious Christian !
The sultan, touch'd by thy severe distress,
Will, sure, respect, in thee, the mourning widow
Of Malek Adhel, and will not divide you.

Mat. (Rising, and lowering her veil.) I'll fly to ask
it of him. Thou, my father,
Turn to the Christians—to the victor camp
Return ; and let me, here, fulfil a duty,
Attending on my husband.

Arch. No, my daughter,
I shall not quit thee.

Kal. See, the sultan comes ;—
And unattended, to this place of woe.

Enter SALADIN. *He walks with a slow step towards the
body, kneels, and embraces it.*

Sal. My brother—Malek Adhel!—my sole friend!
And have I lost thee? Is it truly thou?
Ah! how shall Saladin support, without thee,
The weight of empire?—Prince, thou'rt dead indeed;
And every virtue will, with thee, be buried!
(*Rises.*) Faith, justice, valour, generosity,
Will leave the desolated earth to mourn,
While cruelty and rapine take their place.
Oh! I shall not survive thee long!—In thee,
The world hath lost its brightest ornament,
The sky its light, the empire its defender,
And Saladin his best—his only friend!

Mat. (*Throwing back her veil, and prostrating herself
at the feet of SALADIN.*) Of all that I was destin'd to
possess

On earth, oh pow'rful monarch! nothing, now,
Remains to me, save this pale corse.—Oh sultan!
I do conjure thee, take it not away!

Conspire not, with my griefs, to ruin me!

Sal. (*Greatly troubled.*) What dost thou ask of me?

Mat. I ask my husband!

The prince, before he died, embrac'd my faith,

Receiv'd my marriage vow, and gave me his :
 Permit me, then, to pass my few short hours
 Of sad existence, by his coffin's side!—
 Give me, of Malek Adhel, what alone
 Remains of Malek Adhel, still, on earth.
 Lend, noble Saladin ! an ear of pity
 To the last pray'rs of a despairing wife !

Sal. (Raising her with kindness.) Art thou indeed,
 my brother's wife ?

Mat. (Bursting into tears.) Oh, Heaven !
 I was,—I was ! Alas ! I am no longer !

Arch. Great sultan, I bear witness of the truth ;
 And know, that Malek Adhel died a Christian,
 And died Matilda's husband.

Sal. (After a pause.) Malek Adhel
 A Christian died ? What strange event is this ?
 I know that Anselm would not stoop to falshood,
 Or should refuse it credit. Malek Adhel
 A Christian died ?—Oh ! fatal, fatal beauty !—
 Thou, who hast robb'd me of my brother, living,
 Hast caus'd his loss, and even after death,
 Hast snatch'd him from me—keep, still keep thy hus-
 band,

Since his last vows were thine.

Mat. (Letting fall her veil.) Thanks, gracious sultan.
 Now have I nothing of the world to ask ;
 And soon shall I withdraw from it, for ever.

Sal. Widow of Malek Adhel, where the spot
 Which thou hast chosen for the final rest
 Of these belov'd remains ?

Mat. With me they go
To Carmel's monastery—last retreat
Of grief eternal, soon to be my tomb.
Oh! there, more happy than on earth I hop'd,
Near to my husband I shall live, and die.

Arch. Oh! noble sultan! to the Christians grant
Some days of truce, that they, with solemn pomp,
Their rites of burial may in peace perform.

Sal. Christian, I grant the boon, but, though I give
You him, who gave himself, by his last vows;
His murderer must be consign'd to me.

Arch. The impious instigator of his murder,—
Lusignan,—fell, ev'n by the hero's hand,
In single combat; and the sordid tool
Of his iniquity, lives but to suffer
The tortures of remorse, and late repentance.

Sal. Still let him live to suffer. If 'tis so,
I'm satisfied.—Oh! there my brother lies!—
Take him, since he among *your* dead hath chosen
His last abode; and Kaled,—follow me.

[Exit SALADIN, followed by KALED, each with slow steps, and sorrowful countenances.]

Mat. (*Sitting down beside the body.*) Peace to thine
ashes, oh! thou most belov'd!—
Peace, if it may be, to Matilda's soul!
Oh! wherefore dost thou suffer yet, my soul,
This mortal sadness? Wherefore art thou plung'd
In deep dejection thus?—Thy best-belov'd
Hath ceas'd to mourn, ere now; and, while thy weak-
ness

Would call him back to earth, he tastes of joys
Unspeakable, surpassing human thought,
Ev'n in the bosom of felicity,
To which high Heav'n hath, in its mercy, call'd him !

THE CURTAIN DROPS.

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(200-201) 202

ARISTODEMUS;

OR,

The Spectre.

I

✓ 1. Drunzy Italian - Translations into
English

ARISTODEMUS;

OR,

THE SPECTRE.

A TRAGEDY.

In Five Acts.

From the Italian of the Abate Vincenzo Monti.

[Translated by Frances Balfour.]

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY PERMISSION,

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE AND MONTGOMERY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ARISTODEMUS, King of Messenia.

LYSANDER, Ambassador from Sparta.

PALAMEDES, a Captive in Messenia.

GONIPPUS, } Friends of Aristodemus.
EUMÆUS, }

CESIRA, a Captive in Messenia.

The Scene lies in the Royal Palace of Messenia.

ARISTODEMUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Royal Palace in Messenia.

LYSANDER and PALAMEDES.

Lys. YES, Palamedes ; to Messenia's court,
Doth Sparta send me, messenger of peace.
Sparta is weary of these ceaseless wars :
And now our laurels, dyed in patriot blood,
Seem weighty to our brows ; nay, ev'n disgraceful !
Wrath, now, subdued by pity—Reason rules ;
Persuading us 'tis worse than folly,—madness,
Through a mean jealousy of foreign states,
To hew men piecemeal, and lay waste the earth.
Since then, our foes have been the first to wish it,
Peace, Sparta willing grants, and peace I bring.
Nor this alone ; but freedom from the yoke,
To all the sons of Sparta, here detain'd
In slav'ry. Chief, to thee, beloved friend !
Who, still regretted and desir'd, hast languish'd

Three tedious years, within these hostile walls,
A sad, unhonour'd, yet illustrious captive.

Pal. Lysander, I with joy again behold thee.
Yes ; 'twill to me be sweeter, from thy hands
To welcome freedom, and return once more
To meet th' embraces of my kindred friends,
Amid the green Amyclæ's pleasant shades.
And yet kind fortune could not have reserv'd me
A happier bondage, than I here experience.
Thou art not ignorant, that, here, Cesira,
Talthybius' beauteous daughter, also dwells
My fellow-captive : now, moreover, learn,
That, in the royal sight, such favour found
The lovely features of the fair Cesira,
Her gentle manners, and her modest speech,
That, with a servile chain, Aristodemus
Would never have her charg'd ; but rather, heaps
Fresh favours, still, upon her ; giving me
Permission so to share her prosp'rous fortune,
That free I range, as now, the royal palace,
At my own will.

Lys. The king, then, Palamedes,
Loves her !

Pal. He loves her with a father's heart ;
And only when with her, the wretched man
Feels in his breast infus'd, a few small drops
Of joy, to soften the severe affliction
Which ever weighs upon him. But for her,
No gleaming smile would e'er be seen t' illumine
His sad, and darksome countenance.

Lys. Through Greece,
Is this his mortal melancholy known ;
Yet none assigns the cause. But here, methinks,
That must be manifest, which, elsewhere, rests
Profoundly secret. Kings have ever round them
A thousand keen and vigilant observers,
Who note each word, each look, each half-drawn sigh,
Nay, sift their very thoughts. Here then, amidst
So many prying eyes, what real source
Hath been discover'd, of his sadness ?

Pal. I,
Without disguise, as 'twas to me imparted,
Will tell this wretched prince's mournful tale.
Messenia, scourg'd by cruel pestilence,—
The Delphic Oracle requir'd a maid,
Born of th' illustrious race of Æpytus,
In sacrifice to Pluto, to be slain.
The lots were drawn, and nam'd Lyciscus' daughter:
When, by an impious pity mov'd, her sire
Snatch'd her, by secret flight, from threaten'd death.
Another victim, the defrauded people
Demanded. Then stood forth Aristodemus ;
And his own lovely daughter, bright Dircea,
Spontaneous offer'd to the priest. Dircea,
Slain at the altar in the other's stead,
Ev'n with her pure blood slak'd the greedy thirst
Of dark Avernus ; to procure the health
And life of others, yielding up her own.

Lys. Thus far, I've heard before ; for loudly, fame

Proclaim'd around the fact ; and of her mother,
Related too, a direful circumstance.

Pal. Unable to support Dircea's death,
And prompted by a grief that rose to madness,
She her own bosom pierc'd, and headlong fell,
A bloody, and disfigur'd corse—rejoining
(A frantic, thus, and voluntary shade),
Her daughter, in the empire of the dead.
Yet this, of the heart-struck Aristodemus,
Form'd but the second woe ; to which, a third
Succeeded, in the sad, untimely fate
Of young Argia.—She, her father's last
Remaining hope, (a lovely infant girl,
Whose tender foot still trac'd uncertain steps)
Scarce half a lustre had attain'd. He, then,
While closely to his bosom clasping her,
Was wont to find the painful mem'ry soften'd
Of his past sufferings ;—find a father's name
Lisp'd by her tongue, strike sweetly to his heart,
And cheer his pensive brow. But brief his joy ;
And ev'n this last remains of bliss soon vanish'd.
For, suddenly, our armies gaining, then,
Amphæa's fatal day ; and with fierce siege
Threat'ning Ithome's steeps—Aristodemus,
Who fear'd the city's seizure and destruction,
Tore, from his fond paternal heart, his child,
And to Eumæus' long-tried faith consign'd her,
Bidding him bear her, safe, to Argos' walls.
Long, first, he waver'd ; and with many prayers,

Committed to his trust a life so precious.
Vain care!—For there, where Ladon's stream com-
mingles

With fam'd Alpheus' flood, a troop of ours,
Warn'd of their flight, or thither urg'd by fate,
Attack'd and kill'd the guides; nor spar'd a life;
And 'mid the rest, the royal babe was slain.

Lys. And know'st thou, Palamedes, nothing more
Of that transaction?

Pal. Nothing more.

Lys. Then, know,
Lysander was the leader of those bands—
'Twas I attack'd Eumæus.

Pal. Hah! is 't true?
Wast thou destroyer of the young Argia?
Here, were it ever known—

Lys. Pursue thy tale.
We'll find an after-time to talk of this.

Pal. Aristodemus, by Argia's fate,
Heart-struck, now yielded all his soul to grief:
Nor ever since, has aught of pleasure shone
On his sad heart; or gleaming there, 't has seem'd
A lightning's flash,—which, momentarily,
Shoots through the veil of night, and disappears.
Still pensive, sad, he's seen to wander, now,
'Mid solitary spots,—and tow'rd high Heaven,
Heaves, from his inmost heart, deep sighs and groans.
Now, frantic, heard to howl aloud, by name,
Still calling his Dircea,—at the foot
Of her sad tomb, he, sobbing, casts himself,

And motionless remains, embracing it:
So motionless, a statue thou mightst deem him,
Did not the tears, which take their silent course
Down his wan cheek, and stream upon the tomb,
Proclaim him living. Such, Lysander, now,
Is of this wretched king, the woeful state.

Lys. Sad state indeed! But be it what it may,
It nought concerns me. I am hither come
Sparta to serve,—not pity Sparta's foes.
On this, th' important things I have to say,
Must wait a fitter time; for now, behold
Some one approaches, who might note our words.

Pal. Look: 'tis Cesira.

SCENE II.

CESIRA, LYSANDER, and PALAMEDES.

Fair Cesira, come;
Behold Lysander, the illustrious friend
Of your renowned father.

Ces. (to LYSANDER.) From Gonippus,
Who bore, ev'n now, the tidings to the king,
I learn'd, my lord, your coming; and in haste
Have flown to meet you. Say, I pray, what news
Bring you of my beloved sire? How fares
His venerable age?

Lys. The hope, alone,
Of seeing thee again, preserves his life.
Cesira, yes; ev'n from the fatal hour,

When sad Therapne's field beheld thee made
A captive by the foe, a deadly weight
Of grief, preys on him: fearing, still, for thee
The ills of slav'ry, nought affords him comfort;
And all his joy 's the sole, sad luxury
Of the unhappy,—tears.

Ces. He knows not yet,
Aristodemus' generous mind; knows not
How lavish he hath been of bounties tow'rd me.
Nor how, love, pity, gratitude—conspire
To bind me to him, by a pow'rful tie;
So powerful, in truth, that, when I leave him,
My heart will seem divided from my bosom.

Lys. To this extent, dost thou, then, feel for him?

Ces. Alas! his sorrows speak to every heart;
And, more than all, to mine! Nor can I tell thee,
What I would give t' alleviate them, and learn
All their sad, latent cause.

Pal. To judge of that
From signs external, it must be tremendous.
Gonippus solely,—he, to whom he speaks
Freely, his inmost thoughts,—Gonippus only,
Might wrest the dreadful secret from his heart.

Ces. Behold Gonippus.—Oh! how much disturb'd
His looks! what deep affliction clouds his brow!

SCENE III.

GONIPPUS, CESIRA, LYSANDER, *and* PALAMEDES.

Ah! why thus sad, Gonippus? Wherefore weep'st thou?

Gon. Who would not weep? Aristodemus now,
Hath reach'd to such excess of mental anguish,
That it becomes distraction. Now he raves,
Groans, sighs,—like leaves, too, shaken by the wind,
His whole frame trembles. His wide-wand'ring eyes,
Affrighted roll; while on his cheeks, the tears
Dry, ling'ring in their channels. The past hour
In wild delirium spent, he quits, at length,
His own apartments; and desires again
Here, to behold the cheering light of day.
His grief free vent requiring, I beseech you
All, to withdraw hence.

Lys. When fit time shall serve,
Recall, Gonippus, to thy lord's remembrance,
That here, Lysander asks an audience;
And waits his summons only.

Gon. Thou, with speed,
Shalt be acquainted, when his pleasure's known.

SCENE IV.

GONIPPUS, *then* ARISTODEMUS.

Gon. How vain the pomp and splendour of the
throne!

If closely view'd, what misery oft surrounds it!

Behold the greatest prince, the potentate
Most dreaded throughout Greece, become so wretched,
That, not to pity him, were savage sternness!—
Advance, my lord. Here no one overhears us;
And safely thou mayst vent thy bitter griefs.
We are alone.

Aris. Oh! my Gonippus, fain
Would I be hidden from all human sight!
Ay, hidden, if I could, ev'n from myself.
All troubles, all disquiets me; lo! too,
Yon Sun himself, which I, awhile ago,
So eagerly desir'd, I now detest,
And cannot bear his light!

Gon. Nay, yet look up,
Be not dishearten'd thus. Where, now, is flown
The generous spirit of Aristodemus?—
His fortitude, his courage, where?

Aris. My courage?
My fortitude?—I've lost them. I am even
The hatred of high Heav'n; and, when abhorr'd
Of Heav'n, ev'n monarchs are debas'd and vile.
I once was happy, once, was powerful: now,
I am the last, the lowest of mankind.

Gon. Yet what to thee were needful, to confirm
thee
The first of mortals? Plainly I perceive
Some dreadful thought, which thou from me con-
cealest,
Has thus disturb'd thy mind.

Aris. Gonippus, yes:

A thought most horrible.—*How* horrible,
Thou ne'er canst guess. Thine eye can never pierce
Within my heart: it cannot see the storm
Which rages there, and lays waste all my soul!
Ah! trusty friend! Believe me most unhappy—
Beyond all measure wretched:—impious,
Accurs'd, condemn'd ev'n by the wrath of Heaven;
Th' abhorrence both of nature and myself!

Gon. Alas! how strange a tumult of the mind!
Grief, sure, bedims thy reason; and thy sadness
Springs, simply, from derang'd imagination,
Replete with fancied ills.

Aris. Oh! would it did!

But, dost thou know me? Know'st thou, too, what
blood

Is dropping from my hands?—Hast thou beheld
The sepulchres, wide-yawning, from their depths
Send forth their spectres to o'erturn my throne?
Nay, with their hands thrust in my bristling hair,
To wrest from me my crown? Hast thou e'er heard
A voice tremendous thundering around:

“Die, die, accursed wretch!”—Yes; I will die:

[*Wildly.*

I'm ready.—Here's my breast,—my heart's warm
blood:

Shed, shed it all: be nature's cause aveng'd;
And save me from the horror of thy sight,
Relentless shade!

Gon. Thy words, in truth, appal me.—
Too much thou'st said, to be misconstrued now:

Thy soul, I see, is stung with fell remorse.
How hast thou sinn'd? What crime hast thou committed

T' inflame the Gods with so much wrath against thee?
Unfold this mystery.—The fidelity
Of thy Gonippus is well known to thee;
Oft hast thou honour'd him with confidence:
Entrust him, now, with this; for still, the weight
Of ills is lessen'd by participation.

Aris. Mine, by disclosure, would but be embitter'd.
Seek not to penetrate their hidden source,
Gonippus.—Tempt me not to break a silence—
Ah! leave, in pity, leave me!

Gon. Never, no!—
While thou maintain'st that silence. These white
locks,
And my long service, have not, sure, deserv'd
Distrust from thee?

Aris. But what is thy design
In thus entreating? For, the veil remov'd,
Which hides this fatal secret,—horror, sure,
Will strike thee dumb!

Gon. Ah! what canst thou reveal
Which yields not to the horror of beholding
Thee, thus, expiring in my sight? My lord!
I do beseech thee, by the tears I shed,—
And by thy sacred knees which thus I clasp,—
No longer torture me,—but speak! [*Kneeling.*

Aris. I will,

Since thou so earnestly entreat'st it.—Rise.

Oh Heaven! What a tale must I unfold!

[Draws a dagger from his bosom.]

Gon. Speak on;—proceed.—What weapon is't thou grasp'st?

Aris. A murd'rous steel. Inspect it. Dost thou mark

This blood congeal'd upon it?

Gon. —Heav'n! What blood?

Who shed it?

Aris. From my daughter's heart it came;
And know'st thou, by what hand?

Gon. No more, no more!

Utter it not:—too well I understand thee!

Aris. But dost thou know the cause?

Gon. There, I'm perplex'd.

Aris. Hear then. Remember thou hast wrung from
me,

The dread recital which will freeze thy veins.
Hear me; and learn the whole atrocious truth;
My mystery, and my crime. Recall to mind,
That period, when the Delphic Oracle,
For Erebus demanding human victims,
A virgin of the race of Æpytus
Was, from Messenia, claim'd in sacrifice.
Thou wilt remember, by the fatal urn,
Lyciscus' daughter, solemnly condemn'd,
By flight was by her father sav'd. For her,
Another maid must perish; and behold!

A second time, assembling round the urn,
Each parent trembled for his daughter's doom.
Precisely then, Messenia's throne was vacant.
Dost thou remember this?

Gon. I do. Moreover,
I recollect, the royal diadem
Was pending, at that time, between thyself,
Damis, and Cleon : for the people's choice
Suspended hung, 'mid three opposing factions.

Aris. Well then, Gonippus : to secure the throne,
At once, and gain the people, hear the thought
Which my unpitying, mad ambition fram'd.
Let me (cried I within myself,) henceforth,
To profit turn the weakness of mankind.
The vulgar ever favour most, the man
Who most can dazzle and deceive them ; thus
A kingdom oft rewards superior craft.
Let me, then, cheat this senseless crowd, amending
Lyciscus' error : let my daughter's blood
Atone it :—be the people, and the crown,
Both purchas'd by her blood.

Gon. Ah, Heav'n !—My lord,
What say'st thou ? What could to thy mind inspire
A project so atrocious ?

Aris. Learn, Gonippus,
The man who is ambitious, must be cruel.
Between his views of greatness and himself,
Place ev'n his father's and his brother's heads,—
Beneath his feet he'll trample them ; and make
Of both, a footstool for himself to rise on.

Such did I make my daughter ; to the axe
Of sacrificing priests, so did I proffer
My child, Dircea. Then did Telamon,
Dircea's lover, aim t' oppose my plan.
He supplicated, threaten'd ; yet, in vain,
Essay'd to tear from me my fix'd resolve.
Desperate, at length, while prostrate at my feet
He fell, my pardon craving, he declar'd,
Dircea could not now be sacrific'd.
A virgin's blood the oracle demanded ;
But she was near to claim a mother's title,
While he confess'd a father's. To his aid,
My wife, Argia came, and, to secure
Belief from me, bore witness to the words
Of Telamon.

Gon. What didst thou then ?

Aris. With rage

I inly burn'd : and, goaded by the shame
Of my insulted honour ; sharpen'd more
By the defeat of my ambitious hopes,
(Since, from my grasp, I deem'd the kingdom torn ;)
Silent, on Telamon my angry eyes
I fix'd, dissembling calmness, though my wrath
To phrensy rose ; and sought my daughter's chamber.
Stretch'd on her couch, I found her ; pale, perturb'd,
Disconsolate ;—her eyes, with weeping weary,
A languid lethargy awhile had clos'd.
Gonippus,—ah ! what wrath might not that sight
Have soften'd ? but wild rage mine eyes had seal'd ;
While indignation boil'd in every vein.

Whence (grasping this accursed steel,) all sense
Of nature's shudderings, wholly quench'd within me,
Furious, I rais'd—then, plung'd it in her breast.
The hapless creature op'd her eyes; she knew me:
Quick cov'ring then her face, "My father, oh!"
She cried, "my father!"—and she spoke no more.

Gon. I freeze with horror——

Aris. To express thy feelings,
Awhile forbear; and thou ere long, Gonippus,
Shalt find deep horror overwhelm thy soul.
Now, agonizing in the grasp of death,
Wounded, and panting still, the victim lay.
With dying eyes she still appear'd to seek
The light again; the last breath faintly play'd
On her wan lip.—Meanwhile, the blood in torrents
Gush'd from the wound, and flow'd beneath my feet.
In the fierce transports of my unslak'd rage,—
And of my crime, yet incomplete,—convinc'd
That she was guilty, with this steel I dar'd
Lay open wide her dying frame.—Nay, dar'd,
Amidst the hot smoke of her weltering corse,
To seek her crime—oh! she was innocent!

Gon. (after a pause.) Gods! Could the wildest fury
so transport thee?

Aris. Ask not:—suffice it, she was innocent.—
Then, from mine eyes the bandage fell; then, clear
The fraud appear'd; and pity whelm'd my heart.
Through all my shiv'ring veins, cold horror ran;
Nay, even seem'd to petrify the tears
That rested on my cheeks. Congeal'd I stood,—

Until her mother, entering suddenly,
Beheld the direful spectacle. Awhile,
Pale, cold, and mute, she gaz'd; then, desp'rate
rush'd,

Swift as the winged lightning, grasp'd the poniard,
Which, from my nerveless hand, had fall'n to earth,
And, piercing her own bosom, fell, in death
Extended by her murder'd daughter's side.
Behold the fatal end of both. Behold
The mystery, which fifteen years have seen
Entomb'd within my heart; which, but for thee,
Were buried still, within it.

Gon. Thou hast told,
In truth, a fearful tale; and thy narration
Has with such horror chill'd my freezing veins,
That from the bare thought, all my soul recoils!
Yet, tell me, how have scenes so terrible
Been, still, conceal'd from all enquiring eyes?

Aris. Be not at this surpris'd. My name was great,
My name was dreaded too; and, to the throne,
The general suffrage, at this period, call'd me.
'Twas easy, then, t' effect a fraudulent purpose;
For, well thou know'st, the shadow of a throne
Spreads wide, to cover crimes. The feeble priests,
(Who are constrain'd the voice of Heav'n itself
To hide in silence, when the law of force
Speaks from the lips of power) alone, and silent,
Beneath the fav'ring shade of night, convey'd
Within the precincts of the sacred fane,
The dead Dircea: raising thus, belief

That she, upon the altar slain, that night,
Had, with her blood, appeas'd th' offended gods.
Her virgin frame they shew'd, to falsify
The base and wide-spread fraud of Telamon;
Adding, that heart-struck by Dircea's fate,
Her mother had, in phrensy, slain herself.
But o'er the wicked, still, the eyes of Heaven
Are vigilant; and there is, sure, a God,
Who, from the tomb itself, will rouse to life,
From their long sleep, the crimes of guilty men,
Thund'ring their cry ev'n on their impious hearts.
Shall I divulge it?—I, some time, have been
By a tremendous spectre——

Gon. (interrupting.) Leave, ah! leave
The fear of spectres to the vulgar herd;
And seek not from their graves to raise the dead.
Think, for thy comfort, that thy keen remorse
May lessen, in the sight of Heav'n, thy crime.
Be calm; give place to thoughts of greater moment.
I have already told thee, that Lysander,
Th' ambassador from Sparta, is arriv'd,
And brings us terms of peace. Hear him; reflect,
It is thy country that entreats this peace;
And that her walls, and her few torn remains
Of devastated empire, recommend it.

Aris. Then shall my country be obey'd. Come hence.

[Exeunt.]

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

LYSANDER and PALAMEDES.

Pal. How strange a tale is this ! I'm so replete
With wonder, that I feel as in a dream !
Cesira,—daughter of Aristodemus ?

Lys. Speak lower.—Yes, Cesira is his daughter ;
His lost, his long-deplor'd Argia. How,
On Ladon's banks, I took her prisoner,
Three lustres since ; and how compassion, then,
For the poor innocent, o'ercame me, I
Already have inform'd thee : I proceed
To tell thee, that,—designing to employ her
Against Aristodemus' self, should need
Require,—I, to my friend Talthybius, gave
In charge to rear her ; binding him, by oath,
Ne'er to divulge her birth. He rear'd, and lov'd her
As she had been his own : he was reputed
Her father, and took pleasure in the name :
And, though he had it not by nature, love
Entitled him to bear it.

Pal. Has Cesira
Suspected aught of this ?

Lys. Nay ; never aught.

Pal. But what became, then, of Eumæus,—he
Who bore the babe in charge?

Lys. A prison held
Eumæus, safely; for 'twas my intent,
In him, a witness of the truth to keep,
And call for, at my need. I, therefore, spar'd him,
Not through compassion, friend, but policy.

Pal. And lives he still?

Lys. I know not: for the duties of the field
Have held me long remote from Sparta's walls.
But well, ere this, Talthybius knows, who shar'd
Throughout, my confidence unlimited.

Pal. Strange tale!—But wherefore, to the injury
Of these unhappy beings, wouldst thou, now,
With fruitless caution, still, the secret hide?

Lys. Nay, 'tis a secret useful to the hate
Of Sparta;—useful to her deep-laid schemes
Of policy; and comes, at once, in aid
Of universal vengeance. Call to mind,—
Aristodemus is our greatest foe.
The valleys of Amphea, yet, are red
With our best blood, shed by his vengeful sword:
The Spartan widows, weeping still, deplore
Their husbands slain; while, by his hand transpierc'd,
At once, a sire, and brother, I bewail.

Pal. He slew them, bravely, in an equal field:
Not like a base assassin.

Lys. Wouldst thou have me
For this, forgive him, or abhor him less?

Pal. Abhor him? Wherefore?—Pardon me; I too,

Well recollect the slaughter ; and the flames
Of our paternal roofs : and still, methinks,
I see Aristodemus, 'mid the fires,
Tread my slain children's bodies in the dust :
Yet, not for this, do I abhor him ; since,—
Possess'd of power,—I had myself, 'gainst him,
Shewn equal enmity ; but rather, I
Feel grateful tow'rd's him, who so kindly freed
From me, my chains, as from a friend ; and truly,
I should ev'n love him, were I not a Spartan,
And he Messenian born.

Lys. 'Tis evident,
That slavery has corrupted, in thy mind,
Its pristine, strict, and vigorous sentiments.
But though *thy* thoughts have chang'd, so have not
mine :

Within my heart, if any virtue dwell,
Assur'dly, 'tis not pity for my foes.
For ill should I esteem I serv'd my country,
Did I, forgetful of th' imperious duty
Of every Spartan soul, through weak affections,
Betray her cause.

Pal. Is pity, then, a weakness ?

Lys. If to our country prejudicial,
'Tis more ;—di graceful and unjust.—But see,
Cesira comes.—Retire we hence. More safely,
We elsewhere may converse. I'd have thee know
The whole importance of this mystery.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

GONIPPUS and CESIRA.

Gon. They'll talk of peace ; but the result, Cesira,
Who, of this singular discourse, may tell ?
The vulgar eye transpierces not the depth
Of kingly thoughts. To govern and dispose
Is, still, the sov'reign's part : 'tis ours t' obey.
Yet hope I peace ; and peace, I'm well assur'd,—
Provided Sparta with discretion seek it,—
Aristodemus wishes, and will grant.

Ces. Alas ! I know not why, I rather fear it ;
And feel my soul divided in its choice.
To Sparta, now, a mourning father calls me ;
Now, in Messenia, pity for the fate
Of sad Aristodemus, bids me stay.
And, should I be oblig'd to leave him—Ah !
Heav'n knows how painfully 'twill wring my heart !
What secret, sweet intelligence exists,
Through which his mournful features won my soul
I cannot comprehend ; but, more than these,
Methinks, his very misery binds me to him.
I only know, that, when remote from him,
My days will be disconsolate and sad.

Gon. And dost thou deem that, losing thee, his days
Will be more joyous ? Oft have I observ'd
The wretched king, when by *thy* side, t' appear
Forgetful of his sorrows. Often, too,

A word, a smile of thine, has had the power
To calm the tempests that lay waste his soul,
And render life itself less painful to him.

Judge then, what anguish will attend thy loss !

Ces. See, he approaches ; and his looks, methinks,
Speak, somewhat more compos'd, his spirit.

Gon. True.

He comes a conference of peace to hold ;
A subject to discuss, whereon depends
The kingdom's welfare :—and, when cares so weighty
Demand his thoughts, all other cares give place.

SCENE III.

ARISTODEMUS, GONIPPUS, and CESIRA.

Aris. Let the ambassador from Sparta come.

[*Exit GONIPPUS.*]

SCENE IV.

ARISTODEMUS and CESIRA.

Aris. If fate propitious smile on me, this day,
The long-protracted enmity, Cesira,
Of Sparta and Messenia shall have end ;
And we, once more, shall welcome peace. But yet,
The first-fruits of such peace will bring, to me,
A taste of bitterness ; since I must lose thee,
And here in sickness, and in grief remain,
While thou shalt, gladly, wing thy flight, to seek
The walls of Sparta, long desir'd in vain.

Ces. This proves, thou dost not read my heart ; but
Heaven

Both reads, and comprehends it.

Aris. Generous maid !

Wouldst thou, indeed, with willingness remain ?
Couldst thou sincerely wish it ? Ah ! forgett'st thou,
Thy father, who, while anxiously awaiting,
Lives but in the fond hope of seeing thee ?

Ces. My father lives for ever in my heart :
But thou art also here ; [*Laying her hand on her heart.*
and still, for thee,
This heart pleads warmly, telling me, that thou
Hold'st ev'n superior right : a right, thou claim'st
From my true gratitude, from thy misfortunes,
My pity,—and another fond sensation,
Which agitates my soul ; and yet remains
Ev'n to myself, inexplicable.

Aris. Yes :

Our hearts, indeed, hold sympathy together ;
But, to thy father, and to him alone,
Thou ow'st these tender sentiments, *Cesira*.
Return to him ; and be his comfort still.—
Happy old man ! I cannot number thee
'Mid those, whom Heav'n 'has, in its wrath, made
fathers,

But to chastise them. Thou wilt have, at least,
One who may close thine eyes ; and thou wilt feel
In death, thy cheeks warm'd by a daughter's kisses,
And water'd by her tears.—While I—Oh, Heaven !
Hadst thou but left her to me !—even I

My hopes might also flatter with like bliss,
And bury all my sufferings in her arms!

Ces. How! Of whom speaks my lord?

Aris. I speak, Cesira,
Of my Argia. Pardon, that so oft
I call her to remembrance. Well thou know'st,
In her, my last, my dearest hopes were centred
Of consolation, in my wane of life.
Methinks I see her, even now: her form
Imagination cruelly portrays;
And while, in thee, I fancy I behold her,
With trembling, and with palpitating heart,—
Heav'n mocks my fruitless fondness.

Ces. Wretched father!

Aris. Still had she liv'd, her years had equal'd
thine:

Nor had, perchance, her charms and virtues bloom'd
To thine inferior.

Ces. 'Twas a fatal step,
Indeed, my lord, the sending her to Argos;
The peril of her capture unforeseen.

Aris. Yes; 'twas a fatal step: a foolish prudence.
Ah! was not the unhappy babe with me,
Sufficiently secure? A safer shield
Can children have, than the parental breast?

Ces. Oh! wherefore has Heav'n torn her from
thee?

Aris. Heaven
Design'd the full completion of my woes.

Ces. Still did she live, would it content thee fully?

Aris. Cesira, one embrace of hers,—one sole
Embrace, and I were happy.

Ces. Would to Heaven,
I, then, were she!

Aris. Ah! if thou wert—My daughter!

Ces. Call'st thou me, daughter?

Aris. Yes; that name, my heart
Impell'd my lips to utter.

Ces. And *my* heart,
With like affection, bids me call thee, father.

Aris. Yes, yes; still call me father.—In that name,
A charm I find, a sweetness, that transports me.
Fully to taste the pleasure it affords,
'Twere needful to have drain'd, as I have done,
The bitter chalice of calamity;
The pangs of nature to have felt,—and keenly!
One's children to have lost, and lost for ever!

Ces. (aside.) He breaks my heart.

SCENE V.

ARISTODEMUS, CESIRA, and GONIPPUS.

Gon. My lord, the orator
Of Sparta comes.

Aris. Oh, Heav'n! in what a moment
Does he surprise me!—Go, and leave me, both.
Farewell, Cesira; we shall meet again.

SCENE VI.

Manet ARISTODEMUS.

Aris. Awake, arouse thee, now, my dormant virtue!
Behold, at stake, the welfare of our kingdom ;
Whence it, at once, behoves us to maintain
Our rights, and satisfy our people's wishes.
Yes! to command, be 't now, the subject's part;
And be 't the king's, t' obey. But, like a king,
Let him obey: nor let Aristodemus
Be seen to crouch, a timorous suppliant
For peace, from hostile hands. Nor breathe my words
The servile spirit of peace ; as, in his heart,
Doubtless, this haughty Spartan deems they will.

SCENE VII.

ARISTODEMUS *and* LYSANDER.

Aris. Lysander, sit ; and freely now, impart,
Be they of adverse or of friendly scope,
The views of Sparta.

Lys. To Messenia's king,
Sparta sends health ; and peace, if he desire it.

Aris. Peace I demanded ; it is, therefore, clear,
That I desir'd it. And I now, with joy,
Hear that, at length, of strife and slaughter weary,
Sparta, desisting from an unjust war,
Seeks to renew our ancient amity.

Lys. How ! unjust war ? Call you that war unjust,
Which aims t' avenge an injury sustain'd ?
Your subjects, with the blood of Teleclus,
Polluted the Limnean sacrifices ;
And Teleclus, (you know it,) was our king.
From this, and from no other source, have sprung
Our long contentions. This, my lord, remember.

Aris. Nay, I on this have purposely been silent,
Only to spare thee shame. Say now, Lysander,
Where learn'd the great Alcides' generous sons
Meanly to skulk, disguis'd in female robes ;
And basely plot the death of my Messenians ;
Who then, in all the confidence of peace,
With hymns, with dances, and with festal rites,
Around the sacred altar were assembled ?

Lys. That tale, full oft, hath diff'rently been told :
Neither is Sparta so devoid of worth,
That, purposing destruction to her foes,
By making war, she need descend t' adopt
Th' unworthy medium of a base pretext.

Aris. 'Tis true ; while Sparta deems herself possess'd
Of pow'r superior, she but ill maintains
Her dignity, employing base pretexts.—
When contests are decided by the sword,
Justice and truth become an useless plea,
If not injurious ; nor, indeed, is justice
The virtue Sparta boasts ; but despotism
Adroitly veil'd beneath the modest cloak
Of liberty. 'Tis hence, your policy
T' avoid the path of honour, if it seem

To lead to aught that hurts yourselves ; and fly
With ready zeal, to profitable crimes.
To sow dissension, still, 'mid neighbouring states,
And, when division has impair'd their strength,
T' attack them suddenly, and, more betray'd
Than conquer'd, drag them to a servile yoke.
And thus, all Greece ye would subdue. In truth,
A noble art is this, of conq'ring empires !
And dare ye boast yourselves, for other states,
A bright example ? Of the fam'd Lycurgus,
Are you the fellow-citizens ? Did he
These laws bequeath to you ?—Away ! Strip off
These pompous seemings. To the eyes of men,
Shew fewer laws, and more substantial virtues :
Yes ; let faith, honour, justice, henceforth reign
Ev'n among you, degen'rate sons of Sparta !

Lys. Sire, clemency still reigns among her sons ;
And what, were it not so, would be your fate ?
Already are the rocks and tow'rs, that crown'd
The heights of burnt Ithome, laid in ruins.
And should all-conqu'ring Sparta further urge
Her triumph, what Divinity defends you ?

Aris. Aristodemus.—And, while still *he* breathes,
He will suffice alone : and when the grave
Receives him, still, his silent ashes there
Shall, ev'n in death, strike terror to your hearts.

Lys. Deem you, my lord, that they who fear you not
Alive, will fear you dead ?—But, if we meet
To parley of offence alone, I've done.
To Sparta I return ; and I will warn her,

Not yet to sheathe the sword ; but challenge, here,
Her few remaining foes. [Rises.

Aris. (*Rising.*) Return to Sparta,
Ev'n what thou wilt ; but warn her yet, at least,
That, to subdue those few remaining foes,
She, first, must breathe awhile ; and with fresh blood,
Her empty and exhausted veins replenish.

Lys. Less will she need, than now, Messenia asks,
To heal the wounds which, weeping, she deploras.

Aris. Grant that Messenia weep ; 'tis not less true,
That Sparta does not smile.

Lys. Yet, Sparta's pride
Stoops not to sue for peace.

Aris. I sued for peace.
And now, let Sparta tremble, lest, repentant,
I should reject it. Well she knows, the arms
Of Elis, Argos, Sicyon, prop my cause:
She knows how ardent a desire of vengeance
Inflames Messenian breasts ; how keen our swords,
How strongly-nerv'd our arms. She knows, full well,
That various are the fortunes of the field :
She well remembers, that, when she o'ercame us,
Fraud, more than valour, ever won the day.
Lysander, this the sum of Sparta's mercy :—
Peace to concede, and boast of clemency,
Through fear, alone, of being foil'd in war.

Lys. For war declare, then.

Aris. I declare for peace.
And thank your Gods, that so I fix my choice.
Oh, yet, had it been true !—But come ;—once more

Let us be friends,—

[They sit again.]

be brothers ; and forgetting

Our past dissensions, sheathe the angry sword.

Shall human wrath eternally endure ?

Have we from Heav'n receiv'd the gift of life,

Only to hate and massacre each other ?

Did Nature, from the bosom of the earth,

Bid us the iron tear, that man might pierce

His fellow's breast, and make it so, the tool

Of human slaughter, and inhuman crimes ?—

Unless we shortly terminate our wars,

Both Sparta and Messenia will be deserts.

Nor will there aught remain, ere long, in either,

Save wretched bands of widows and of orphans.

And what, meanwhile, says Greece, of our dissensions ?

She says: The horrible atrocities

Of Thebes, we're now renewing ; that, the Spartans,

With our Messenians own the self-same blood ;

That, Thebes, two fratricides alone disgrac'd ;

But here, they are as num'rous as the corpses

With which our savage fury strews the field.

And wherefore all this rage ? But for a few

Parch'd clods of earth, which barely will suffice

T' afford us sepulture ;—which yet, are crimson'd

With fathers' and with brothers' blood, of whom

Ourselves are the assassins.—Ah ! let Greece

No longer tell, of us, such tales of shame !

Or, if fame move us not, at least, let interest.

Proud Thebes and jealous Athens, by our side,

Of our protracted contests, wait th' event,

To fall upon the wearied conqueror;
Strip him of victory; and overthrow
His rising greatness. Now, while in our power,
Let timely peace prevent these threaten'd ills.

Lys. Or to accept, or to reject it, lies
Entirely at thy choice.

Aris. It first were needful,
To hear the terms propos'd.

Lys. They're briefly these:
"AMPHEA YOU SHALL CEDE, WITH THE TAGETUS;
AND COME NO MORE TO HOLD YOUR FEASTS IN LIMNÆ."

Aris. The first and second articles, I grant;
The third reject; moreover, ask, what cause
Excludes us, thus, from Limnæ's solemn feasts,
And robs us of the Deity's protection?

Lys. The first spark of a war, which thirty years
Of bloodshed, have not yet suffic'd t' extinguish,
Broke forth, amid the feasts of Limnæ. There,
Will burst the second, if the cause be not
With speed remov'd. 'Tis therefore, needful, since
Such wrath still burns between us, to cut off
That perilous communication.

Aris. Know
That, by disgraceful means, Aristodemus
Stoops not to purchase peace. Our wealth, our
honours,
Our lives, our children, all we own, in short,
May be surrender'd; but the Gods, Lysander?—
The tutelary Gods, the long-rever'd

Religion of our fathers, and the chief
Of all our duties and affections?—

Lys. Add,

Chief of our errors, too. I to a man,
Am speaking, who would scorn to be enslav'd
By vulgar prejudices. To a warrior,
I speak, who smiling with contempt, beholds
These Gods, (mere shadows rais'd by human fear,)
And rests, meanwhile, his hand upon his sword.
How far, till now, by this Limnean God,
We have been profited, I'm yet to learn;
But this, full well, I know: that, in times past,
He hath much injur'd us; and will, yet more,
If haply now, another, greater Power,
Nam'd Prudence, in a seasonable time,
Diminish not his votaries and victims.

Aris. Frank speech I'll frankly answer. Hitherto,
So little have the Gods befriended me,
That I, too surely, cannot boast their favour,
Yet, do I not presume to scorn their power.
I have, within my heart, full many a reason,
Secret and forcible, whereby I'm urg'd
Both to adore and fear them. If, thy self,
Thou own'st a motive for acknowledging,
Own, also, one for venerating them.
If thou hast none, respect the people's error;
Awful not less, than are the Gods themselves,
Since it gives law to kings, and none obeys.
Your own example, too, I here may cite:

Elis, erewhile, from the Olympic games,
(As all well know,) would have excluded you :
What tumults rose among you, on this insult !
With what preparatives of arms,—what wrath,
Did ye oppose yourselves to this repulse !
And yet, th' offence was widely different.
In her own state did Elis exercise,
Her own undoubted right ; while Sparta fought
For a Divinity not hers. But here,
At once, for our hereditary temples,
And for our Gods domestic, do we fight.
Ours is the soil, the altars ours ; and know
That, to preserve them, still, untouch'd, we'll fight
While we have arms and hands ; and, these cut off,
We'll combat with our breasts : for where War lifts
The standard, in Religion's name, will men
Fight hoodwink'd, while to rage ev'n pity turns—
Such rage, that life is yielded ere the sword.
No more. If Sparta seek a solid peace,
The chief foundation of such peace be this :—
To leave to us our Gods. If she contest it,
Return we to hostilities.

Lys. Not so.

Turn we our thoughts to peace. I glory not
In obstinate adherence to my purpose :
That is the weakness of inferior minds ;
And great enough I dare esteem myself,
T' allow, to thee, the undiminish'd honour
Of having vanquish'd and persuaded me.

Away, then, with our claims to Limnæ. Yet,
Declare if, to the other terms we offer,
You willingly subscribe, my lord?

Aris. I do.

Behold, in pledge, my hand. Remains there, now,
Aught else to be requir'd of me?

Lys. Nought else.

Aris. Farewell Lysander, then.

Lys. Aristodemus,

I take my leave. Farewell.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Tomb in the distance, and ARISTODEMUS seated beside it.

Aris. No, no ; were mine existence here eternal,
I feel that equally eternal, still,
Would be my mental anguish. Give me, Heav'n !
But courage to endure it. Tempt not thou
My hand, nor dim my reason.—Wretched man !
What have I said ? My reason ?—What, if 't were
My best of hope, to lose it altogether ?
What, if a single stroke might terminate
Mine every ill ?—Yes, all my sufferings,
One, single stroke ?—Let me avoid that thought :
Let me not dwell upon it ; for, already,
'Tis too seducing to my heart. And thou,
Importunate and too remorseless shade !
At length be pacified !—oh ! be pleas'd,
And pardon me ; for I, however guilty,
May plead a father's name. My crime was great ;
I know it ; but I am a father, still ;
And thou a daughter,—thou, who dost torment,
And persecute me, with such ceaseless rage.

SCENE II.

ARISTODEMUS and GONIPPUS.

Gon. My liege, this is no time to nourish grief;
When all Messenia testifies her joy
For the return of peace. Come hence, then; leave
This place of woe, and seek with me, the people.
Present thyself to their exulting sight;
For they demand their king; they pine to see thee,
And call thee, father.

Aris. I, a father?—Once,
I own'd that name; and, with delight, I heard it
Sound ev'n within my heart. But now, no more
I hear it. Nature gave to me that name,
So dear, so sacred; and mine own mad rage
Hath 'reft me of it.

Gon. Dwell no longer, then,
Upon thy loss; and let new objects, now,
Engage thy thoughts.

Aris. And yet, at times, I seem'd
Not wholly to have lost that soothing name.
And often, by the young Cesira's side,
Have I again, in thought, become a father.
Whether it be, that, hearts like mine unhappy,
Feel, still, a mournful need to speak their sorrows,
Yielding themselves, with ease, to the relief
And pleasure of indulging their affliction;
Or whether, of my now declining years,
And sick, desponding state, the dread effect;

Or of sensations, hitherto unknown,
Which deeply make me feel my childless state,
And wake, so keenly in my breast, the wish
To be again a parent ;—whether, even
The strange emotions I acutely feel,
Yet cannot comprehend, be doom'd my scourge,
By an avenging, and an unseen God :
This will I own to thee, that, when with her,
The horror of my suff'rings seems to cease ;
And a sweet, silent joy beguiles my sense ;
Whose gentle influence, stealing through my soul,
Calms its remorse, and draws the gushing tears
From my heart's deep recesses to mine eyes.
Now, shortly, shall I be depriv'd, Gonippus,
Ev'n of this dear illusion.

Gon. If thou deem'st it

For thine advantage, that Cesira here
Remain,—still interpose to her departure
Some motive for delay ; and send meanwhile,
T' entreat it of Talthybius—

Aris. Canst thou think,
That her despairing father, he, to whom
So little life remains,—enough indeed,
Alone, t' embrace his daughter ere he die,—
Canst thou believe, that he would e'er consent ?
Ah ! thou wast ne'er a father !—dost not feel
The charm, the value of so fond a name !
And wouldst thou have me so forget its force ?
So purchase to myself a satisfaction,
Plunging another in despair ?—Ah, no !

Let dear Cesira go: yes, let her hence ;—
And if it can be, without seeing me.

[*Exit GONIPPUS.*]

SCENE III.

ARISTODEMUS and CESIRA.

Ces. Go, without seeing thee !—Ah ! from thy lips,
Issued so harsh a mandate ?

Aris. Wherefore com'st thou,
Dear, fatal object of a wretch's love ?
Avoidance mutual had been, surely, best ;—
And best, to shut for ever, from our eyes,
The mournful pleasure which our meeting gives.

Ces. Oh ! who could so resign it ? How should I
Far from my benefactor go,—nor see,
Nor thank him ; nor with him exchange the sighs
Of bitterness at parting ? Mutually,
To give and to receive the last adieu,
Mingles such sweetness in the cup of grief,
Such moments are delightful.

Aris. All delight
Hath ceas'd for me. Mark'st thou yon marble tomb ?
My peace, my very heart are there enclos'd ;
And there, lies all I have on earth most dear,
At once, and most tremendous.

Ces. I, my lord,
Do not presume to blame your heartfelt grief ;
'Tis nature's law, and therefore it is just :

But, o'er the much-lov'd ashes of their children,
Shall parent's tears for ever flow ?

Aris. For me,

It were not much, ev'n were my tears eternal.
Still, therefore, let me shed them. Tears, my daughter,
Befit my state. They are the only virtue
Which hath remain'd to me ; the only comfort
Which the avenging wrath of Heav'n hath left me.

Ces. Judge better. Heav'n respects, in thee, the
virtue

Of a good father, citizen and king,
Such as thou still hast been.

Aris. (*After a pause.*) Good father ?—I ?
Good citizen ?

Ces. Is not he such, in truth,
Who, mov'd by generous patriotism, yields up
In willing sacrifice t' appease the Gods,
His very children, at his country's need ?

Aris. (*Aside.*) Oh Heav'n ! What dread events does
she recall ?

Ces. And gives them, torn from his paternal arms,
Ev'n to the fatal sacerdotal axe ?

Aris. Hush, prithee, hush ! Thine every word's a
sword

That stabs my heart.

Ces. But here, thou hast not cause
For being sad. Remembrance, such as this,
Is glorious, noble, great ; and, from a father,
Rather than grief, asks proud complacency.

Aris. (*Aside.*) Oh torture !—madness !

Ces. Let the consciousness

Console thee, then, of this thy virtue; which,—
Despite of time and fortune,—ne'er can die;
And with it, for thy comfort, still, recall
Thy subject's love, thy glory, and thy kingdom.

Aris. What sayst thou? Kingdom? Of all human ills,
That is the greatest. Oh! if, from the dust,
Man might interrogate the crowned slave
Upon the throne, thou then wouldst be convinc'd
That, solely for our punishment, full oft,
Doth Heav'n inflict on us a crown and sceptre!

Ces. And yet, the regal diadem is oft
The bright reward of virtue; 'twas, most surely,
Such, when it bound thy brow.

Aris. (*Aside.*) Ah! break we off
A conference that kills me! (*Aloud.*) Much, Cesira,
Thy fav'ring judgment honours me; but thou—
Thou know'st me not. Enough. I too—ev'n I
Have, of a throne, become the proud possessor:
But happy were I, had I ne'er attain'd it!
Oh! blest is he, ten thousand,—thousand times,
Who, o'er his guileless family, alone,
Desires to reign; and asks no other throne
Than his fond children's hearts! The throne of nature;
And oh! from mine how diff'rent! Mine, thou see'st,
Is this sad stone. Allow me, then, to sit
Here, all alone, here weep; and go thou hence,
Cesira,—and be happy.

Ces. In this state,
Must I, then, leave thee?—in this wretched state?

Aris. I'm worthy of it. 'Tis at length arriv'd,
The hour when we must separate ; and never
Again behold each other,—never more !
Thou weep'st, my daughter ! my Cesira, yes,
Thou weep'st to hear this. Oh ! may pitying Heav'n
Reward thy pious tears !

Ces. This grief e'en kills me.

Aris. Farewell.—With kindness to thy father's
thoughts

Recall me. Happy father ! Oh ! when he
Shall question thee upon thy fortunes past ;
And, haply, raise himself on his sick couch,
To hang, intent in silence, on thy speech,
Tell him, how dearly I have lov'd thee still ;
And what sweet interchange of soft affections
Our hearts have held together. Tell him, too,
Aristodemus' sad and painful fate ;
And, sometimes, interrupt thy mournful tale,
With one sad sigh, one pitying tear for me.—
Adieu, now, my Cesira.

Ces. Whither go'st thou ?

Ah ! stay—return.

Aris. What wouldst thou say ?

Ces. Oh Heaven !

I know not ; but I do beseech thee, stay !

Aris. Cesira !

Ces. Oh, Aristodemus !

Aris. Come ;

For I no longer can resist. Come here ;
Ev'n to my heart ;—embrace me—oh delight !
Oh ! sweet inexplicable tenderness !

And yet, this seems not foreign to my heart:
Its pow'r I've felt before. Great Heav'n! dost thou
This strong sensation mingle with my torments,
But to redouble them? Thou cruelly
Deceiv'st, and dost mislead me.—Ah! away,
Cesira: hence! It was a fury, hot
From shades infernal, urg'd me to embrace thee:
Away then—hence!

Ces. I pray thee, hear me yet.

Aris. Leave me, I say.

Ces. What sudden phrensy's this?

Aris. Fly me, ah! fly. A cruel, unseen hand
Between us interposes, and repels
Our meeting hearts. Then fly me far,—far hence.

Ces. One moment only—

Aris. 'Tis too late. Adieu;
Adieu for ever!

Ces. I beseech thee, stay,—
But stay, and hear me! [Exit ARISTODEMUS.]

SCENE IV.

Manet CESIRA.

He avoids me then;
Flies me, in deepest agony of mind;
And I—how shall I have the heart to leave him?
To quit so much affection? To resign
So many dear,—such precious recollections?

Ah! no; I cannot do it.—In the name
Of Heav'n, then, who art thou, Aristodemus?
That thou usurp'st, o'er my sad heart, such sway;
At once so troublest, and so touchest it?

SCENE V.

LYSANDER, PALAMEDES, and CESIRA.

Lys. We were this moment seeking thee, Cesira.
All is prepar'd for our departure hence;
And we await but thee.

Ces. Ah! yet, Lysander,
Delay awhile this mournful separation!
Aristodemus in so sad a state
Of desp'rate grief is plung'd, that I'm alarm'd
For what may be th' event: in me, it were
Ingratitude and cruelty extreme,
T' abandon him: so tenderly he lov'd me;
And so much kindness ever lavish'd on me.

Lys. Chief of the Spartan embassy, I came.
Sparta awaits, impatient, its result;
And all delay, on my part, were a crime.
Thou, if thou wilt, remain. But yet, I grieve—
I for thy father grieve; who, not beholding
His daughter's wish'd return, will suffer, thence,
A weight of heart-felt woe.

Ces. Ah! dost thou think it?

Lys. Grief will accelerate his end, no doubt.

Ces. Well then, let pity for my father's state

Prevail. The Gods, I trust meanwhile, will feel it
For sad Aristodemus, and watch o'er him,
When I am gone.

Pal. (to LYSANDER) She weeps. Ah! see, my friend,
How barbarous a part thou play'st!

Lys. Be silent.
Thy promise keep; and ne'er let Sparta know
Of this thy weakness.

SCENE VI.

GONIPPUS, LYSANDER, PALAMEDES and CESIRA.

Gon. Take from me, dear friends,
My last farewell. Thou Palamedes,—thou
Cesira, sometimes call to mind, Gonippus;
Remember too, Aristodemus. Much
I fear, of him ere long, ye will receive
Dire tidings.

Ces. Say not thus! Heav'n will defend him;
Who virtue still, and the good king, protects.
But tell me pray, how fares th' unhappy man?
What says he?

Gon. Nothing.—Speechless, motionless,
Immers'd in gloomy thoughts, with folded arms,
Alone he sits. Perturb'd and dark of soul,
Now, on the ground, his wildly-glaring eyes
He fixes; while, from time to time, the tears
Stream, from their lids, down his unconscious cheeks.
As one arous'd from sleep profound, he then

Starts up, and roves at random, here and there,
Touching and striking all his hands encounter.
When question'd, still he gazes, but replies not.

Ces. How much I pity him !

Gon. Relief, at length,
A timely gush of tears affords, whereby
The dread, oppressive weight has been remov'd
From his o'er-loaded heart ; and now, more calm,
He asks, if yet Cesira is departed.

This, fain he'd know, and this to learn, I came.

Ces. To him return then : say, thou wert, thyself,
Witness to my departure. With what pain
I go, *my* heart attests. Oh ! bid him live !
Say, his Cesira supplicates it of him.
Bid him resist with fortitude his ills ;
And in the goodness of the Gods confide.
Thou too, support and aid him, still, Gonippus :
I recommend him to thy care and love.

Gon. This heart of mine pleads yet more warmly for
him,
Than do thy words ; and both I strongly feel.

Ces. I both believe, and comprehend, Gonippus,
The state of thy heart, from mine own. Say too,
That I his kind remembrance ask ;—and add,
That I will cherish his lov'd memory,
Long as a soul this grateful breast shall warm.

Gon. All thy commands I'll punctually fulfil.

Ces. Hear yet.—Should he enquire of thee, Gonippus,
If in affliction I went hence, do thou,
Who seest my sorrow, witness it for me.

Lys. The pain of parting, this delay redoubles.

Ces. Then—let us go at once.

Lys. Come, Palamedes.

Pal. Behold me ready. *[Aside.*

I am doubtful, yet,

Whether 'twere best, still to maintain my silence,

Or break my promise.—How shall I resolve?

[Exeunt LYSANDER, PALAMEDES, and CESIRA.]

SCENE VII.

GONIPPUS, afterwards ARISTODEMUS.

Gon. How tender and how grateful is her soul!

Oh, tears! of human pity sweet attestors,

How soothing your enchantment to th' unhappy!

(To ARIS.) At length, my lord, Cesira has departed.

Nor unaccompanied her going hence,

With show'rs of tears, and sighs of heartfelt grief.

Aris. I could have wish'd that she had not departed.

My heart a pow'rful, secret motive own'd

For wishing to behold, yet once again,

And speak with her. But be it so.—Gonippus,

War, grievous war is raging here within me.

Gon. Ere long 'twill cease, I trust: yes, it will cease;

But be not thus enfeebled by thy woes.

Struggle with them, and with thyself! Endeavour

To cast aside each dark, and troubled thought.

Aris. Tell me, Gonippus, tell me, of my state

What dost thou think? Am I not truly wretched?

Gon. We all are so, my lord : each has his sorrows.

Aris. 'Tis true : we all are wretched. We have,
here,

No earthly good, but death.

Gon. How ?

Aris. Yes ; 'tis certain,
Death is our only good. And think'st thou, death
Can painful be, ev'n as it is describ'd ?

Gon. What says my king ?

Aris. Painful ?—I rather deem it,
When 'tis the close of suff'ring, sweet and friendly.

Gon. Ah ! what imply these words, so wildly
raving ?

Aris. (*After a pause.*) Hear me, Gonippus ; I en-
trust thee with it ;

But, I beseech thee, let me not behold
Thee, sadden'd by my words. Yet, one day more ;
Solely, this day—then, down, into my grave.

Gon. Into thy grave ? What mean'st thou ? With
those words,
Thou'st pierc'd my very heart.

Aris. But wherefore thus
Afflict thyself, oh ! my most faithful friend !
Be calm ; I would not wound thy soul : I am
Unworthy of thy tears. Allow then, all
My painful destiny its full completion ;
And let the star, which hitherto, its course
Has guided, set at length. The Sun to-morrow
Will rise, which, from on high, was wont t' illumine
My greatness ; through this palace he will seek me,

In vain! Nought will he find, save the cold stone
Which shall enclose my corse. Ev'n thou, Gonippus,
Shalt see it shortly.

Gon. Cease, I pray thee, cease
Such words to utter. From thy mind dispel
This horrible madness——

Aris. No ; my faithful friend:
Rather, 'twere madness to endure this life,
When it becomes a load.

Gon. Whate'er it be,
It is the gift of Heaven.

Aris. If it makes me
Unhappy, I renounce it.

Gon. Yet, say, whence,
My lord, thou hast receiv'd the right to do so ?

Aris. From my misfortunes.

Gon. Suffer them with courage.

Aris. While still my courage rose to them superior,
I've suffer'd them. It now has sunk beneath them.
That, also, had its bounds : the fulness, now,
Of grief, has overpass'd them, and I yield.

Gon. Thou'rt then, resolv'd ?—

Aris. To die.

Gon. Dost thou forget
That, of the Gods thou, thus, usurp'st the right ?
That men thou dost offend ; and Heav'n itself,
A crime still greater, adding to thy first ?

Aris. My friend, thou speakest with a heart at ease :
Nor canst conceive, how mine is overcharg'd.
Thou ne'er hast in thy children's bosoms thrust

The deadly steel, nor, with their guiltless blood,
A kingdom purchas'd. When it costs a crime,
Thou knowest not, how heavy weighs a crown.
The sleep is thine, of sweet security:
Dread, supernatural voices rouse thee not;
Thou'rt not for ever haunted by a spectre,
Which furious, raging, closely follows thee,
And even seizes thee——

Gon. Thus, of a spectre,
Must I, still, hear thee rave? Oh! good my lord!
Chase these ungrounded fears, that blind thy judgment?

Aris. Ungrounded fears?—Oh! did I tell thee, yet,
How barb'rous 'tis,—thy hair would rise on end,
Through the excess of dread; and on thy brow,
Would stand, impress'd, the terrors of mine own!

Gon. But yet, what pow'r may break through
nature's laws,
And the infernal barrier overleaping,
Draw, thence, the dead to light? And wherefore this?
Aris. To make the living tremble. Trust me, friend,
I'm not, herein, deceiv'd; myself have seen it;
And with these eyes, and with these hands—But
wherefore

Should I relate?—Too dreadful is the tale.

Gon. Must I believe——

Aris. Nay, nay; give it no credit.
I rav'd—'twas but a dream.—Believe it not.—
Oh! dread remains of my departed child!
Dark spectre!—Daughter!—yes; I hear thy moan

Within yon tomb. Peace, peace ; I will content thee.
Be hush'd, then ; rest !—And thou, Gonippus, say,
Dost thou, too, hear it ? Oh ! I hear,—and tremble !

Gon. My lord, what shall I say ? An air of truth,
And ev'n of greatness, so pervades thy words,
They freeze my very heart. And is yon tomb,
Truly, th' abode, then, of a spectre ? hast thou
Thyself, both seen and heard it ? How ?—Ah ! tell me,
Tell, I conjure thee, all.

Aris. Well then ; be this,
This tale of horror, from my lips the last,
Thou e'er shalt hear. Ev'n as thou now see'st me,
Oft do I see my murder'd daughter's shade ;
Alas ! and how tremendous is the sight !
When all things sleep, and I, alone, sit wakeful,
By the faint glimm'ring of a midnight lamp,
Behold ! the red flame suddenly grows pale ;
And when I raise mine eyes, behold, the spectre
Stands in my sight, and occupies the portal,
With form of giant size, and threat'ning mien !
In a sepulchral mantle it is wrapt ;
That self-same mantle, wherewith my Dircea
Was shrouded, when they bore her to the grave.
Clotted with blood and dust, the hair falls back
Upon its visage ; yet more horrible,
By such concealment, rend'ring it. Appall'd,
I backward start, averting, with a groan,
My pained eyes ; when lo ! again I see it
Beside me seated. Fixedly it eyes me,
Immoveable and speechless, long remaining.

Then, from its face, the hair (still show'ring blood,) Removing, opes its vesture, and displays Its mangled bosom,—its disfigur'd form,— Foul with still-dropping, black, corrupted wounds. In vain I thrust it from me; yet more fiercely Advancing tow'ards me, with its breast and arms, It presses on. Oh! then, methinks, I feel The pulses of its heart, still warm, though mangled: While, at the touch, my hair with horror stands Upright, and bristled on my head. I aim To fly; but then, the spectre seizing me, Drags me, ev'n to the foot of yonder tomb; And, "Here I wait for thee!" it cries: this said, It disappears.

Gon. My soul is struck with horror! And, whether this portentous scene be real, Or of a melancholy mind, depress'd, By its afflictions, the delusive work, I pity thee, my liege; for hence, thou needs Must suffer much. But, not the less, it were A weakness to despair. Unshaken firmness O'er all disasters triumphs. Time, and distance May, of thy troubled mind, dispel the mists. Forsake this spot, where, by so many objects Thy grief is nourish'd. Let us travel o'er Thy provinces; and visiting their cities, Their various customs note. A hundred ways Wilt thou, then, find, t' employ and to divert Thy mind.—What dost thou meditate? Alas! Rash man! what dost thou aim to do?

Aris. (*Going towards the tomb.*) I fain
Would enter there.

Gon. Within that tomb? Ye Gods?—
Hold?—to what purpose?

Aris. To consult that shade.
T' appease its wrath, or die.

Gon. Yet stay, my lord;
My king, I do conjure thee!

Aris. What alarms thee?

Gon. I fear thine own wild fantasies. Return;
Give up this project.

Aris. Hope it not!

Gon. Ah! hear me.

Alas! my liege, what if it be the fact,
That there a spectre dwells?

Aris. I long have been
Accustom'd to behold it.

Gon. What intend'st thou?

Aris. To speak to it.

Gon. Ah! no; do not attempt it.

Aris. Let what of dreadful will, befall me, I
That shade will question. I will ask the cause,
Wherefore a crime no pardon can obtain
After such long remorse. I would, herein,
Learn the designs of Heav'n; what it commands,
What it requires from me.

Gon. Hear me.—Oh Gods!
How horrible a project!

Aris. Leave me, now;
Give me free passage, I command thee.

Gon. Yet,
For pity hear me. Since thy will is fix'd,
I ask one only favour; and I ask it,
Thus,—at thy feet. [Kneeling.

Aris. Speak; what dost thou desire?

Gon. My lord, that steel, which by thy side thou
hidest—

Aris. Proceed.

Gon. That steel, I ask of thee.

Aris. (*After a pause.*) Well, take it.

The moment is not yet arriv'd for me:
Take it, affectionate and trusty servant!
So much attachment touches me at heart.
Embrace me; and be *this* pledge of my friendship,
Of thy unequall'd faith, the recompence.
[Enters into the tomb.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter CESIRA, with a wreath of flowers.

Ces. To Palamedes, sure, some friendly power
An obstacle has furnish'd to our going.
I'll profit from it, to behold again
These scenes, so dear to me. Awhile ago,
I left the griev'd Aristodemus here;
And hither, he, perchance, will soon return.
This wreath, my daily and accustom'd tribute,
Meanwhile, I'll o'er yon tomb append. Receive
This token of affection, honour'd shade!
Oh! why art thou not living still, Dircea?
I should with fondness love thee; thou shouldst be
The chosen friend, nay, sister of Cesira.
But yet, ev'n dead, I love thee; and the name
And mem'ry of Dircea, will I hold
Sacred and mournful ever. Hah! what noise
Sounds from within the tomb? What moans and
cries?—

Aris. (*Within the tomb.*) Horrible apparition! hence,
and leave me!

Ces. Oh, Heav'n! it seems Aristodemus' voice.
Oh help! oh aid, ye holy Gods!

SCENE II.

ARISTODEMUS (*rushing impetuously from the tomb, and falling senseless in front of the stage.*)

Ah ! leave me !

Have mercy, cruel shade !

Ces. Where shall I hide ?

Wretch that I am, I neither can behold him,

Nor cry aloud, nor fly.—Who will resolve me ?

How shall I act ?—Oh ! could I but assist him !

Alas ! the pallid hue of death is on him !

How from his brow, distil cold, deadly dew,

While his locks, bristling, stand erect ! The view

O'erwhelms me with affright ! Aristodemus,

Aristodemus,—dost thou hear me ?

Aris. Fly,—

Avaunt, and touch me not, unpitying vision !

Ces. Ope, yet, thine eyes. Look on me : it is I
Who call thee, good my lord !

Aris. How ?—vanish'd—gone ?

Where has it hid itself ?—Who, from the ire
Of that remorseless spirit, has preserv'd me ?

Ces. Of whom, in Heav'n's name, speakest thou,
my lord ?

What seek, on every side, thy roving eyes ?

Aris. Didst thou nor see, nor hear it ?

Ces. Hear,—see, what ?

My whole frame trembles at thy words.

Aris. And thou,

Who in compassion com'st to my relief,
Who art thou ? If from heav'n thou dost descend,
A Deity,—ah ! such proclaim thyself ;
And, prostrate at thy feet, I will adore thee.

Ces. Oh heav'n ! what sayst thou ? know'st thou not
Cesira ?

Aris. Who is Cesira ?

Ces. He has lost, alas !

All recollection ! Know'st thou not these features ?

Aris. I have them here, engraven on my heart.—
Yes, my heart speaks, and now, the veil's with-
drawn.

My sweet consoler, who has brought thee back
To these fond arms ?—Oh ! let me, ev'n with thine
Mingle my tears : my heart with grief will burst,
If tears relieve me not.

Ces. Pour all thy griefs
Into this faithful breast. Thou wilt not find
Another to receive them, more impress'd
With sorrow and compassion. Thou hast utter'd
Words, which have terrified me. Say, what is
This cruel phantom, which so persecutes thee ?

Aris. An innocent being, sent to persecute
A guilty wretch.

Ces. And who that guilty wretch ?

Aris. 'Tis I.

Ces. Thou ?—Wherefore wouldst thou have me deem
thee

So criminal ?

Aris. Because, I kill'd her.

Ces. Say'st thou?
Whom didst thou kill?

Aris. My daughter.

Ces. Oh, great Heav'n!
He raves. Alas! what madness urg'd him on
To enter there?—Ye pitying Gods! If ye
Are pleas'd to be so term'd, by suff'ring mortals,
Restore to him, in mercy, his lost reason!
Ah! let soft pity wake your care!—My lord,
Thou tremblest; say, what dost thou thus contemplate
So fixedly?

Aris. It comes again. Behold there!—
It is the self-same thing. Dost thou not see it!
Ah! hide—defend me for sweet mercy's sake,
From its terrific sight!

Ces. Thou'rt, surely, raving.
I can see nought, my lord, save yonder tomb.

Aris. Look at it, yet. Erect and fierce it stands
Ev'n on the open threshold. Look at it!
On me its stern and angry eyes it fixes.
Oh, cruel one! forbear! If thou art truly
My daughter's shade, why takest thou a form
Like that tremendous?—Who to thee hath giv'n
The right thy father to oppress, and nature?—
'Tis silent; it retreats, and fades away.—
Alas! how barb'rous is its persecution!

Ces. I also, now, through every vein experience
The freezing thrill of fear. The apparition,
I have not seen, 'tis true; but the faint moans
Methought I heard; and that mute horror, issuing

Forth from the open sepulchre ; thy words—
The paleness of thy cheek ; and, more than all,
The tumult which still agitates my soul,
Make me no longer doubt that, in yon tomb,
This dreadful spectre dwells. But tell me, wherefore,
So visibly, to thine eyes it appears,
While 'tis from mine conceal'd ?

Aris. Thou'rt innocent.

Thy mild eyes were not form'd to view the secrets
Which, in their wrath, th' avenging Deities
Discover to the guilty, to appal them.
Thou ne'er hast shed thy children's blood ; and thee
The cry of Nature's self does not condemn.

Ces. And can it be, indeed, that thou art guilty ?

Aris. I've so confess'd myself. But, I beseech thee,
Henceforth, no more interrogate me.—Fly me ;
Abandon me.

Ces. Abandon thee ? Ah ! no :

Thine exculpation, whatsoe'er thy crime,
Is on my heart inscrib'd.

Aris. My condemnation

In yonder heaven, also, is inscrib'd ;
And there the blood, the guiltless blood, Cesira,
Of unoffending innocence inscrib'd it.

Ces. How ? are the dead implacable, my lord ?

Aris. Beyond the tomb, all right of exculpation
The Gods have to themselves, alone, reserv'd.
But, if thou hadst, thyself, my daughter been ;
And I, with impious views, had murder'd thee,
Ah ! say, wouldst thou, a mild and lenient shade,

Thy stern assassin pardon? Say, Cesira,
Wouldst thou, in such case, pardon?

Ces. Ah! forbear.

Aris. And granting that thou wouldst, dost thou
believe,

That Heav'n itself would sanction thy forgiveness?

Ces. But yet, does Heav'n permit the souls of
children

Such long-protracted ire; such cruel vengeance
Against their parents?

Aris. The decrees on high
Are still severe, inscrutable,—mysterious.
Neither, to mortal eye, is it permitted
To pierce their darkness. Heav'n, perhaps, ordain'd
My punishment a warning to mankind;
That ev'ry parent, thence, might learn to fear,
And to respect, the kindly laws of Nature.
Believe me, Nature is, when we insult her,
Fierce and vindictive in th' extreme. The name
Of father, is not lightly borne; and soon
Or late, *he* mourns repentant, who has fail'd
Its duties to fulfil.

Ces. Thou too, hast mourn'd.
The time at length is, sure, arriv'd, to dry
Thy tears, and from the adverse Gods implore
The fruits of thy long penitence. My lord,
Take courage. No crime is inexpiable.
Endeavour to appease yon angry shade,
By choicest victims, and devout oblations.

Aris. (*After a pause.*) 'Tis well; I will do so. Already, too,

The victim is prepar'd.

Ces. Permit me, then,
To share the holy work.

Aris. Cesira, no!

I would not have thee seek to witness it.

Ces. Nay, rather with fair flow'rs, myself will crown
The victim, while I offer pray'rs to Heav'n
That thy sad fate be chang'd.

Aris. It will be chang'd;
I trust it will, ere long.

Ces. Oh! do not doubt it!
Evils have still their limits. Heav'n's compassion
Is often slow, but never known to fail.
And sure, to thee, it least will fail, who all,
By thy repentance hast—He hears me not!
Fix'd are his eyes on earth; nor does he wink
Their lids:—he stands like one to stone transform'd!
What can he be revolving in his mind?

Aris. No more: 'tis ev'n the way. It shall be so,
One instant, and 'tis sleep—I've now decided.

Ces. Hast thou decided?—What? Oh! tell me
what?

Aris. Nothing; but mine own peace.

Ces. And speak'st thou this,
With so much strong emotion?

Aris. No; I'm calm.
Dost thou not see it? I'm completely calm.

Ces. Ah! more this calmness fills me with alarm,
Than thy late phrensy. Oh! for pity's sake—
He gives me no attention. What, ah! what
Is he, beneath his mantle, searching still?
There's not a fibre in my frame, but trembles.

Aris. Another may be found. Whate'er it be,
'Twill serve my purpose. [Going.

Ces. Stay; I pray thee, stay.
Nay, do not go. Ev'n thus I beg it of thee, [Kneeling.
Thus prostrate at thy feet. Oh! listen to me!
And lay thy horrible intent aside!

Aris. Why, what intent art thou imagining?

Ces. Spare me, I pray, the horror of its utterance.
Too plainly I perceive it: terror-struck,
I shudder at the thought!

Aris. Fear nought disastrous
Betiding me. Let this smile reassure thee.

Ces. Wild is that smile, and horrible to sight,
More than thou deem'st; and even that appals me.
No, thine intentions are not innocent.
Forego, my lord, forego them, I beseech thee!
Avoid me not: look at me, I, who thus
Entreat thee, am—Oh, Heav'n! he does not hear me.
His reason is estrang'd, his senses gone!—
Ah! I am lost! stay,—hear,—I'll follow thee—

*[Exit ARISTODEMUS, sternly signing to her
not to pursue him.]*

SCENE III.

CESIRA, GONIPPUS.

Ces. Alas ! does he forbid it to me thus ?
That signal and that frown have terrified me.
Ah ! Heav'n be prais'd ! Some deity, Gonippus,
Hath sent thee hither ; for Aristodemus
Is to distraction driv'n. Run then ; fly to him,
And save him from the madness that transports him !
[*Exit GONIPPUS.*

SCENE IV.

Manet CESIRA.

Aid him, kind Gods ! Oh ! what dire tumults here,
Of strange sensations, rise ! I know, no longer,
Where 'tis I breathe, or move, An unknown power
Incites my tears ; yet I in vain essay
To shed them ; while a voice awakes, within
The deep recesses of my soul, commotions
Mysterious, wild, and of unknown portent ;
Nor know I what to hope, nor what to fear.
I'll sit awhile. My heart is so oppress'd,
That my feet fail beneath me. [*Sits.*

SCENE V.

EUMÆUS, CESIRA *in the distance.*

Eum. In Messenia,
Behold, at length, Eumæus, thou'rt arriv'd.
Oh! how, from Sparta have I journied hither,
Exhausted and fatigued! But yet, in fine,
I am arriv'd. Kind Gods! I thank your goodness,
That ye from Spartan slavery have freed me;
Thus, breaking fetters, which have nearly wasted
My whole of life away. How sweet is, now,
My dear, recover'd freedom! I behold,
Again, my country; and these walls, so long,
And vainly sigh'd-for, while my glad heart leaps
With a confus'd delight. For thee, alone,—
For thee, Aristodemus, do I grieve.
I come to bring fresh sorrows to thy heart.
Eumæus thou wilt see, but not, again,
Behold thy daughter. Heav'n forbade, that I
Should save thy lov'd Argia. Otherwise,
It hath dispos'd events. Now, who will guide me
Into the royal presence? No one, here,
I find, who knows me; and the palace, all
Around, seems desolate. I'll e'en advance
This way——

Ces. (Rising.) Who comes? Your pardon, good old
man;

What is 't you seek?

Eum. I, of the king, would fain

Have audience, noble damsel. I am one
Whom he would gladly see.

Ces. Alas! thou'st chosen
A time most inauspicious. By deep grief
Oppress'd, the king from every eye retires;
And speaking with him, were impossible.
But, if not too presuming my enquiry,
Tell me, who art thou?

Eum. If Eumæus' name
Have ever met thine ear, behold, in me,
Eumæus' self.

Ces. Eumæus!—Pow'rful Gods!
And who knows not Eumæus? Who is ignorant
That, thee, Aristodemus had dispatch'd
To Argos, thither to convey in safety,
His infant child Argia? Yet, a rumour
Ran, here, that thou, near Ladon's mouth, wert slain,
And with thee at the time, the ill-starr'd babe,
By a fierce troop of Spartan soldiers. This,
The king himself has ev'n believ'd; and thenceforth,
Has wept, and still deplores, his daughter's death.

Eum. Whether the hapless infant lives; or where,
Or by what means, I cannot ascertain;
But, since the enemy my life has spar'd,
I well believe they, also, will have sav'd
That of the young Argia; and the rather,
If they its value and importance knew.

Ces. And thou, how hast thou, since, preserv'd thy
life?
How compass'd thy return?

Eum. Long time, within

A dungeon deep, I was immur'd ; and they,
They best can tell, Barbarians ! to what end,
They so prolong'd my miserable life.
Each flattering hope I had already lost ;
And ev'n of freedom the desire itself ;
Save, of my heart, one secret, strong emotion,
Which ever caus'd me to recall to mind
My dear, my native plains, and the blest shores
Of my belov'd Pamisus ; breathing, oft,
A sigh, o'er their sweet, mournful recollections.
Hence did I hope, that pitying death, at length,
Would, from my tedious sufferings release me.
When, suddenly, I saw my prison-doors
Thrown widely open ; and was told, that peace
Between ourselves and Sparta, soon would end
Our martial quarrels, and long-cherish'd hate ;
And that, meanwhile, a chief of the Laconians,
(Of the sad changes of my fate inform'd,)
In pity to my long-protracted ills,
My freedom had procur'd before the time.
To him, without delay I, therefore, hasten'd,
Since gratitude is chiefest of our duties.
An aged man, of venerable aspect,
I found ; who lay, then, at the point of death.
Up-raising from his couch, his frame infirm,
He came to meet me, and embrac'd me, weeping.
Then said : " Seek not to learn the cause, Eumæus.
" Which has induc'd me to unloose thy chains.
" It will be known to thee, when, in Messenia

"Thou shalt arrive. There shalt thou seek, with speed,

"A damsel nam'd Cesira."—

Ces. Heav'ns!—Cesira?

Eum. The same precisely. "Give her this," he added;

And drawing forth a scroll, with trembling hand,
To me consign'd it.

Ces. Ah! I pray thee, tell me
His name.

Eum. Talthybius.

Ces. Oh, ye Pow'rs!—Talthybius?

What is 't thou say'st? Was it, indeed, Talthybius?

Eum. Was he, then, known to thee?

Ces. He is my father;

I, that Cesira, whom he bade thee seek.

Eum. 'Tis well; if thou art she, behold the paper
Talthybius gave me. *[Gives a scroll.]*

Ces. Give it me. I feel
My heart all trembling agitation.

[Opens, and reads the scroll.]

"When thou this scroll shalt read, Cesira, death

"Already will have cut my vital thread.

"Before I die, this I reveal to thee,

"This secret of importance. I, thy father

"Have only been, by ties of fond affection.

"Who was thy real father, none can tell thee,

"Except Lysander. Well his name he knows;

"And if he hide it, 'tis alone, because

"He secretly detests him, and betrays thee.

"Farewell. An oath forbids me to say more;

"But what Talthybius here asserts, is true."

Where am I? What strange tale is this I've read?

Eum. Lady, I now the cause can comprehend,
Wherefore Talthybius, at his death, exclaim'd,
While tears roll'd down his cheeks: "Would I had
"ne'er

"Deceiv'd an innocent maid!"

Ces. (*Reading.*) "His name he knows;

"And, if he hide it, 'tis alone, because

"He secretly detests him, and betrays thee."

Does he, indeed, betray me? Ah! vile traitor!—

But let me haste to seek this barb'rous man.

SCENE VI.

LYSANDER, PALAMEDES, EUMÆUS, and CESIRA.

Ces. (*To LYSANDER.*) Thou seasonably com'st.

Read this.

[*Gives the scroll.*]

Eum. Methinks,

I've, elsewhere, seen that face, assuredly.

Assist me, memory! to recall its owner.

Lys. (*Returning the scroll.*) This paper's false; and
old Talthybius doted.

Ces. Talthybius doted? False, perfidious man!

This is no raving of a dotard's brain.

Eum. No; I mistake not: 'tis ev'n he. Just
Heav'n!—

Oh! let me, let me speak! (*To LYSANDER.*) Fix,
here, thine eyes.

Know'st thou this countenance?

Lys. To my remembrance

It seems not new, yet I recall it not.

Eum. Forgett'st thou, then, the mouth of Ladon's
flood,

The little stolen child?

Lys. I know it, now.

But how alive,—and here?

Eum. In me, behold

The man, from whom thou stol'st the hapless babe.

Ces. Of whom, Eumæus, dost thou speak?

Eum. I speak

Of young Argia. This, in truth, is he
Who took her from me forcibly.

Pal. Now speak,

My friend; or I myself will all reveal.

Eum. Make answer: tell th' unhappy infant's fate?

Lys. Dissembling, now, were vain. No more. The
maid

Thou seek'st, of whom I robb'd thee, the long-lost
Argia lives,—and lives in thee, Cesira. [*To CESIRA.*]

Eum. I well foresaw it.

Ces. How? What said Lysander?

Who am I?

Eum. Thou'rt the long-deplor'd Argia;

Thou art the daughter of Aristodemus.

Oh! my heart told me this!

Ces. And am I, then,

Aristodemus' daughter? Thou, barbarian!

[To LYSANDER.

Thou knew'st me such, and hadst the heart, so long
To hide the truth? Oh! base, ignoble spirit!
More vile, more worthless, than the dust we trample;
I comprehend thy views; but Heaven, in justice
Has thwarted them. Away! I cannot bear
The horror of thy sight.—What stays me here?
Oh! let me to my father fly, and change
In his fond arms, his sorrows into joy!

[Exit hastily, followed by EUMÆUS.

SCENE VII.

Manent LYSANDER, and PALAMEDES.

Lys. Heard'st thou her mortifying words?

Pal. I did.

Lys. Let us go hence; and let me, elsewhere, bear
My deep chagrin and shame.

Pal. Yes; we will hence.

I, now, go willingly; since with my friend,
I've not by breaking faith, my honour stain'd;
Nor bear I hence away with me, remorse
For having, long maintain'd an unjust silence.

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

GONIPPUS, *then* ARGIA.

Gon. Ah! where can he have, thus, conceal'd himself?

I, with a trembling heart, am seeking him,
Yet scarcely for an instant hath he left me!
Wherefore did he deceive me? Why affect
To court repose, and disappear so swiftly?—
Argia here?

Arg. Gonippus—

Gon. Hast thou found him?

Arg. Nay, hast *thou* seen him?

Gon. My research is vain.

Arg. Alas! unhappy me!

Gon. Be not disturb'd.

Thy father hath no weapon. From his side,
The poniard, which he held, I took away.

Arg. Hast thou that poniard still?

Gon. (*Producing the dagger.*) Behold it here.

Arg. Yet, should he find another? Oh! for Heav'n's
sake,

Let us, again, throughout the palace, seek him!

Gon. What if, meanwhile, he hither turn?

Arg. I, then,
Will here remain. But go—run thou with speed—
Be not a moment lost!

SCENE II.

Manet ARGIA.

Alas! what dire
Forebodings of disaster overwhelm me!
Father—Aristodemus—oh! my father!
Dost thou not hear me? All, alas! is mute;
And nothing seems to answer, save the echo
From yonder tomb.—Oh! holy Gods! what if
He were within it hidden?—Yes, too surely,
Awhile ago he was so: doubtless, then,
Fresh mental wand'rings have, again, misled him.
I'll seek him, there, myself.—But if the spectre?—
Ah! when a father's valued life 's in danger,
Shall I, by fear of spectres, be deterr'd?
I'll enter: yes, though all *Avernus* open'd
On my shock'd gaze, I'd meet it unappall'd!

[Enters the tomb.]

SCENE III.

ARISTODEMUS.

Arg. Behold the tomb,—the altar, which my blood
Must bathe. This steel, at length, I've found. Its
point

Is sharp; then let me strike.—How? tremblest thou,
 Inhuman father?—Thou shouldst then, have trembled,
 When thou the bosom of thy sleeping child,
 Didst pierce remorseless. Ill it, now, befits thee
 To hesitate: 'tis thine to die: and thou,
 Come forth; thou horrible spectre! 'Tis thy time.
 Come; and behold thy vengeance all fulfill'd!
 Direct, thyself, the blow.—It hears my words,
 It hastens hither. Hark! I know the sound!
 Lo! the tomb shakes! 'Tis here. Come; welcome
 shade!

Thou hast demanded blood; and this is blood.

[*Stabs himself.*]

SCENE THE LAST.

ARGIA *from the tomb*, ARISTODEMUS, GONIPPUS, and
 EUMÆUS.

Arg. Oh hold!—Alas! what hath thy rash hand done?
 What fury hath transported thee?

Gon. Eumæus,
 Run thou, support him on that side; and here,
 We'll gently lay him. [*They bear him to a couch.*]

Aris. Trouble me no more,
 Officious friends:—too late, and vain, your cares.
 Leave, leave me!

Arg. Oh! for pity, curb this phrensy!
 Know that—I am—Tears interrupt my speech.

Aris. Imprudent girl,—Cesira,—wherefore here?

Content,—more satisfied, I should have died,
Without beholding thee. Who brought thee here
In cruelty? And who art thou, beside me,
Compassionate old man, who, weeping still,
Dost hide thy features? I would fain behold thee.—
What face is that?

Eum. Ah! Sire, in me behold,
And recognise thy faithful, tried—

Aris. Eumæus?

Eum. Yes, 'tis ev'n he. Thy daughter, too, is safe—

Aris. Argia?

Eum. Whom to me thou didst entrust,
And hast deplor'd as lost—

Aris. Proceed.

Eum. Already,
She stands before thine eyes: look there,—'tis she!

Aris. How? Is Cesira, then, my daughter?

Arg. Yes;

But oh! dear father, if I, now, must lose thee,
How shall it profit me?

Aris. Do I then, thus
Regain thee? thus?—The vengeance, now, of Heaven
I see completed: now, of death I feel
The torturing rack. Oh! fatal, late disclosure!—
Child, in my heart an impious phrensy burrs,
Which, ev'n perforce, will have me curse the hour
In which I know, and lose thee!

Arg. Pitying Gods!
Restore to me my father, or with him,
Here, let me die!

Aris. Unthinking girl! What pity
Expect'st thou from the Gods? That they exist,
I do, indeed, believe; and my misfortunes
To my confusion, prove it; but, they're cruel:
Their rigour, child, hath forc'd me to this step.

Arg. Oh! hear me, Heaven! and behold my tears!
Pardon his rash, insensate words!—My father!
Add not a crime to thy calamities—
The greatest of all crimes, the blasphemies
Of desperate men!

Aris. 'Tis the sole privilege
Which hath remain'd to me. Shall I expect
In this state, clemency? How can I ask it?
Or know, ev'n, if I wish it?

Arg. Banish yet
This horrible fear: compose thy troubled mind,
And raise thine eyes to Heav'n.

Gon. He casts them downwards;
And inly murmur'ing, changes countenance.

Aris. Ah! whither are ye dragging me? Where
am I?

What desert wild and dark is this? Drive hence
Yon pallid ghosts! Oh! say, for whom prepar'd
Yon red-hot scourges?

Arg. Oh! my heart dies in me!

Eum. Unhappy king!

Gon. The agonies of death
Bring on delirium. Sire,—Aristodemus—
Dost thou yet know me? 'Tis Gonippus speaks:
This is thy daughter.

Aris. Well, what would my daughter ?
Grant that I slew her ; I have also mourn'd
Her fate untimely. Is that insufficient
T' avenge her cause ? Then, let her come before me :
I'll speak to her, myself. Oh ! look at her !
Her tresses are compos'd of shaggy thorns,
And viewless sockets in her forehead stand !
Who put her eyes out ? Wherefore gushes forth
Blood, from her wounded nostrils ? Draw, I pray you,
Draw o'er the rest, a veil.—Here, with the skirt
Of this my royal mantle, cover her !
Destroy that worthless crown, stain'd with her blood ;

[Tearing off, and throwing away his crown.

Then, scatter its remains,—its dust, o'er all
The thrones on earth ; and tell their kings, that, still,
A crown, by crimes obtain'd, is bought too dearly ;
And that I died— [Dies—

Gon. How dread a death! 'Tis o'er.
Aristodemus, in that groan, expir'd!

THE CURTAIN DROPS.

FINIS.

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